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MCMXX

The Shaping Forces
of
Modern Religious Thought

A History of Theological Development

By
Archibald B. D. Alexander, M.A., D.D.
Author of "A Short History of Philosophy"
"The Ethics of St. Paul," "Christianity and Ethics," etc.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE title of this work, it is hoped, fairly indicates its purpose and method. The book is an endeavour to achieve for religious thought what the writer's *Short History of Philosophy* attempted for speculative problems. It seeks to trace the evolution of the spiritual ideas which have shaped the conceptions of modern Europe. Though historically treated the theme does not profess to follow a strictly chronological order. While striving to estimate the personalities and writings, as well as the moral and intellectual influences which have been potent in moulding the development of thought, the volume is concerned with values rather than external happenings.

The survey begins with the general awakening of Europe, of which the Renaissance and the Reformation are the dominant features, and practically ends with the Great War of our own times. The extent of the field chosen and the number of topics discussed, involving the examination of a long succession of writers and books, necessarily preclude the circumstantial description of characters and events which is distinctive of what is usually styled history. The object is rather to show how the cardinal principles of Protestantism, born of the epoch of Renascence, have been developed and elaborated at the hands of many thinkers; and

8273

how under the action and reaction of a variety of complementary and conflicting forces there has ultimately emerged the resultant of ideas which constitute the religious *Anschauung* as well as the theological challenge of our age.

The book is therefore not merely historical; it has also a critical and constructive aim. Without attempting a definition of religion the view adopted in these pages is that the religious instinct is the earliest, as it is the most distinctive, element of the human spirit. It assumes many shapes. Yet under every form it is the quest of man for the ultimate basis and meaning of life. This search for reality would, however, prove illusory and hopeless if there was not also in religion a divine or objective truth—a revelation of God Himself, whose being is independent of the fluctuating emotions and subjective conditions of human experience.

Religious thought, especially since the Reformation, discloses a series of one-sided efforts to attain the fullness of reality, construing religion now in terms of the inner consciousness and now of an abstract and eternal decree.

A main purpose of the present volume is to examine these various subjective and objective types and finally to show how the ultimate values can be conserved alone by forming a conception of religion which does justice to both sides of spiritual reality—the divine manifestation and the human realization. The modern tendency to interpret religion in terms of the inner consciousness alone and to make reality dependent upon subjective feeling seems to be peculiarly misleading and defective. Faith stands or falls with the belief in absolute values. Whatsoever may be the method of our approach to God, the conditional and subjective values of the pragmatist have no meaning unless we

have settled beforehand the independent value of truth. Indebted as we are to the Ritschlian School for much that is suggestive and quickening, it seems to me that the divorce of philosophy and theology and the emphasis upon psychological conditions of the human consciousness in the interpretation of the meaning of religion, involve an attitude of mind which tends to disparage and render doubtful the absolute reality and supremacy of those values for which God as revealed in Christ must ever stand. Reluctant as we may be to accept "any form of theism which does not sustain in every part the full circle of man's human interests," none the less must we be resolute in maintaining the conception of God which ascribes to Him the central and dominating place in thought and life and refuse to make Him dependent upon our varying emotions or merely instrumental to our immediate interests.

The volume has been divided into three parts: The First, "Foundational Types," deals with some of the partial phases of religious thought which have appeared in history as attempts to express the faith of man. The Second, "Contributory Factors," considers certain activities not directly religious, but philosophical, scientific and literary, which have exerted considerable influence in enriching and modifying the later stages of spiritual culture. The Third, "Resultant Tendencies," describes the modern trend of thought, especially during the nineteenth century, and seeks to indicate the recent movements which have helped to create the present situation.

Our age demands, as the French would say, "vues d'ensemble," large views, presented in the smallest possible compass. In order to keep the book within reasonable limits it has been found necessary to exclude

some topics, only less important in my judgment, than those which have been included.

In the preparation of the work I have been indebted to a large number of books, some of which, though I fear not all, are mentioned in the list at the end of the volume. I have endeavoured, so far as I am conscious of these, to acknowledge my obligations in footnotes.

To my nephew, Robert Glassford Alexander, M.A., LL.B., I would gratefully express my thanks for his valuable aid in reading and correcting the proofs.

ARCH. B. D. ALEXANDER.

Langbank, Scotland.

CONTENTS

I.—FOUNDATIONAL TYPES

CHAPTER FIRST

THE SPIRITUAL RENASCENCE

PAGES

Law of Continuity—Great Moments in History—New World takes rise with Reformation—Views of Guizot, Baur, Troeltsch as to Causes—I. Spiritual Awakening—Anticipations of Dawn—Evangelical Forerunners—Savonarola, Huss, Wyclif — Early Mystics — Eckhart, Tauler, Thomas à Kempis—II. Intellectual Revival, The Renaissance—Discovery and Enterprise—Note of Personality—Secular Tendency—Higher Ideals—Liberalizing Effect of Humanism—Erasmus - - - - - - - 3-20

CHAPTER SECOND

THE PIONEERS OF PROTESTANTISM

The Personal Element in History—Carlyle, Every Age needs its Prophet—Reformation embodied in Luther—Three Pioneers, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin—I. *Luther*—Courage and Bluntness—Little talent for Organization—Rediscovery of God—Religion, a Personal Question—Reaffirms two great truths : " Justification by Faith " and " Freedom of a Christian Man "—Significance of these—Influence of Luther—His Limitations ; Mediaevalism, Arbitrary Method, Moral Inconsistency, Subjectivity of Theology — II. *Calvin*—Church Polity — Theological System, *Institutes*, Basal Idea ; Divine Sovereignty—Implications, Fore-ordination and Election—Difficulties involved : Strain's Idea of Divine Love, Suppresses Freedom, Encourages Fatalism—Yet Doctrine of Election " put Iron into the Blood "—Ethics of Calvin, Austere but Majestic—Obedience to God's Command—Life, a holy calling—Objectivity of Calvin's teaching—Absolutism—Reality and Mystery of Election—To be interpreted as Election to Service - - - - - - - 21-45

CHAPTER THIRD

IN THE WAKE OF THE REFORMATION

PAGES

Era of Reaction and Decadence—I. Causes of Decline: (1) Social Condition of Europe, Peasants' and "Thirty Years' War"—(2) Counter-Reformation—Ignatius Loyola, The Jesuits, Inquisition—(3) Divisions within Protestantism. II. Socinianism—Its Theology—Arminianism—Remonstrants—Grotius on Satisfaction of Christ—Saumur School—"Federal Theology" and Theory of "Covenants"—Cocceius and his idea of development compared with Hegel's Philosophy of Religion—III. Significance of Arminianism as protest against Absolute Monism—But Mechanical Dualism untenable—Figure of "Potter and Clay" must be balanced by "the spark which disturbs our clod" - - - - - - - 46-68

CHAPTER FOURTH

THE PROTEST OF PURITANISM

Origin and Character of English Reformation—Anglican Church, a compromise—Three Tendencies: Puritans, Prelatists, and Mediating Party—I. Puritanism, its Origin in Wyclif—Its Principle, Belief in Bible—Matters of Dissatisfaction: Ritual, Church Polity and Morals—Narrowness and Fanaticism, Macaulay, Taine, Buckle quoted—Cromwell's Character—Letters—His Masterfulness—Earnestness and Sincerity—Sense of Divine Mission—Disparagement of Puritan Writings—Yet produced notable Literature—Owen, Howe, Baxter, Milton, Bunyan—II. Anglo-Catholic Party—Contrasted with Puritans—Hooker, Examination of *Ecclesiastical Polity*—Andrewes and Laud—III. Mediating School—Claim of Reason—Lord Falkland, Hales, Chillingworth—His *Religion of Protestants*—Jeremy Taylor—"Liberty of Prophesying"—Hallam's Strictures—Estimate of the Movement—Significance and Vitality of Puritanism - 69-99

CHAPTER FIFTH

THE THEOLOGY OF RATIONALISM.

The Character of Eighteenth Century—Age of New Beginnings—Its Radicalism and Promise—Intellectual Awakening of England—I. Precursors, Descartes, Bacon, Hobbes—Reason Criterion of Truth—Spirit of Age embodied in Deistic Controversy—II. Lord Herbert and Locke—

PAGES

Definition and Aim of Deism—Assumed three phases: *Theological* objections—(1) Toland's *Christianity not Mysterious*—Tindal's *Christianity as old as Creation*—Conybeare's Reply: (2) *Ethical*—Shaftesbury and his School—Chubb, Morgan: (3) *Critical* questions bearing on Prophecy and Miracles—Collins, Middleton, Sherlock, Woolston—III. Sceptical Writers, Hume, Gibbon, Bolingbroke—IV. The Apologists—Their Number, Prudential Character, "Ethics of Consequences." Bishop Butler—His *Sermons* and *Analogy*—Analysis and Estimate of Analogy—Law of Probability—Pascal—Dualism of Reason and Faith - - - - - - - - 100-125

CHAPTER SIXTH

PHASES OF PIETISM

Reaction from Rationalism—I. Pietism in Holland—Influence of Spinoza.—II. In Germany—Boehme's Mysticism—Arndt, Spener, Franke—The "Halle" School—Revolt from teaching of Wolff—Zinzendorf, Bengel—Moravian Society—III. Quietism of France—Jansenism—Port Royal—Bossuet and Pascal—Madame Guyon and Fénelon—IV. Evangelical Revival in England—Roots in Geo. Fox and Wm. Law—Methodism, its rise and growth—The Wesleys and Whitefield—Wesley's Gift of Organization—"The World my Parish"—His Theology—Opposition to Calvinism—Criticisms of Movement—Tendency to Separatism—Its Subjectivity and Individualism—Emphasises aspect of Gospel neglected by Intellectualism - - - - - - - - 126-149

II.—CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS

CHAPTER SEVENTH

THE INFLUENCE OF IDEALISTIC PHILOSOPHY

Our Study so far mainly Historical—Two elements prominent: Principle of Subjectivity and of Objectivity—Religion interpreted, now in terms of Human Consciousness, and now as Divine Decree—Broadening effects of some factors, not directly religious—Influence of Modern Philosophy. I. Kant, attempt to reconcile Reason and Faith—Theory of Cognition—Knowledge confined to appearances—Moral Postulates; God, Freedom and Immortality—Religion determined by "Enlightenment"—His Dualism—II.

PAGES

Agnostic Tendency of Comte, Hamilton, Mansel, Huxley, and Spenser—III. Transcendental Movement—Unity of Self involves Knowledge of Reality—Fichte's view of Religion—Schelling—Collective Humanity, true Incarnation—Hegel's Absolute Idealism—Examination of his *Philosophy of Religion*—Doctrine of Trinity—The Incarnation—"Dying to live"—"Right" and "Left Wing"—Contributions of Idealism to Religion: (1) Idea of Development, (2) Conception of God, (3) Apologetic, (4) Christology - - - - - - - - - 153-179

CHAPTER EIGHTH

THE CONTRIBUTION OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM

Raises Questions of Revelation and Inspiration—I. Sketch of O.T. Criticism in Germany — Eichhorn, De Wette, Vatke, Ewald, Graf, Wellhausen—II. New Testament—Three Problems involved: (1) Person of Christ, Strauss's *Leben Jesu*, (2) Primitive Christianity, Baur and Tübingen School, (3) Synoptic Problem: three theories discussed—"Oral," "Documentary," "Dependence Theory"—The Epistles—The Johannine Gospel—The Logos—III. Biblical Criticism in Britain—Lyell's *Principles of Geology*—Alexander Geddes—Paley's *Horae Paulinae*—Thirlwall's Translation of Niebuhr's *History of Rome*, Milman's *History of Jews*, Arnold's *Rome*, mark new epoch—Colenso, Rowland Williams, Perowne, Pusey, Stanley, Jowett—Scottish School of Old Testament: A. B. Davidson, W. Robertson Smith, Geo. Adam Smith—Progress in Britain and America—Influence on Religious Thought 180-202

CHAPTER NINTH

BEARING OF SCIENCE ON RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

Conflict of long standing—Three stages: Theological Dominance, Revolt and Independence of Science, Mutual Service—I. Church Supremacy—Actuated by zeal for God and Dread of Knowledge. II. Revolt of Science—Influence of Reformation—Birth of Freedom and Individuality—But persistent superstition—Copernicus' Conception of Universe—Its effect on Theology—Bacon's *Novum Organum*—Newton's Law of Gravitation dissipates magical view of Nature—III. Attempts at Reconciliation—The Practical Sciences—Progress of Invention—Steam applied to Machinery and Transport by Land, Sea, and Air—Expansion of Commerce—Unity of World—The Theoretical Sciences—

PAGES

Conservation of Energy—Law of Gases—Electricity—Scientific Monism and Revelation. IV. Theory of Evolution—Darwin and his Critics—*Origin of Species* and *Descent of Man*—Questions involved: (1) Problem of Continuity: Views of Haeckel, Weismann, and Driesch, (2) Natural Selection—"Survival of Fittest," Ambiguity of Phrase—"Symbiosis"—Evidence of Service and Sacrifice in Nature—(3) Purpose, Teleological Element—Crux of Position—Critical remarks—Relation of Science and Religion—Central question: Is there room for autonomy of the Spirit? - - - - - - - - 203-229

CHAPTER TENTH

THE RELIGIOUS PROBLEM AS AFFECTED BY LITERATURE (CONTINENTAL)

"Poetry, the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge"—Kinship of Poetry and Religion—I. Dante stands on verge of Old and New World—The Eternal Pilgrimage—Quest of the Spirit—II. French Literature—The Seventeenth Century—Influence of Descartes, Montaigne, Bossuet, Pascal—The Dramatic School, "Corneille and the Four Friends"—Fettered by the "Unities"—France of next period Literary Sovereign of Europe—Voltaire, Mouthpiece of Age—His *Letters*—Rousseau, *Back to Nature*—Defence of Religion—His Individualism—seeds of Reconstruction—Victor Hugo, central figure—His Message and Influence—III. Literature of Germany—Late Intellectual Enfranchisement—Lessing, Herder, "Sturm und Drang" period—Goethe—Two periods in his life, also in his *Faust*—Influence of Rousseau and Spinoza—Estimate and Criticism of *Faust*—Relation to Christianity—"The Sanctuary of Sorrow"—Culture—Life a Whole—Schiller, poet of Freedom—Influence of Kant—Dignity of Man—IV. Romanticism—Schlegel and his Circle—Novalis, Paul Richter, Heine—*Young Germany*—Revolutionary School—Feuerbach and Nietzsche—The Philosophy of Crass Materialism - - - - - - - - - 230-251

CHAPTER ELEVENTH

THE SPIRITUAL MESSAGE OF MODERN ENGLISH POETRY

Strands of Religion and Poetry closely entwined—I. Romanticism in England—Appeal to Nature, Gray, Thomson: and to Man, Cowper, Burns—II. Influence of French

PAGES

Revolution—Southey, Coleridge, Wordsworth—Poetry and Philosophy of Coleridge—*Ancient Mariner*, its religious meaning—Poetry of Nature and Man culminates in Wordsworth—"Something far more deeply interfused"—Pervading presence of God—Shelley—Despair and Hope—Most Spiritual of Poets—Poetry of Wonder and Mystery—Influence on Theology—The Poets of Doubt—Clough and Arnold—Yet note of Faith—Tennyson and Browning—*In Memoriam*—Agnostic Element, yet witness for Faith and Immortality—The Higher Pantheism—Browning, the poet of life, its travail and triumph—His Ethics—His view of Christianity—His Optimism—The Eternal Christ - - - - - - 252-274

III.—THEOLOGICAL TENDENCIES.

CHAPTER TWELFTH

SCHLEIERMACHER AND THE REVIVAL OF THEOLOGY

Eclecticism of New Period—I. Schleiermacher, father of Modern Theology—Influenced by Romanticism and Spinoza—Compared with Hegel—His Works—II. *Discourses on Religion*—Religion essence of life—An inward Experience—Feeling of Dependence—*Der Christliche Glaube* treats directly of Christianity—A Redemption mediated through Christ—III. Theology of Schleiermacher—Being of God—Nature of Sin—Origin of Evil and Doctrine of Election — Soteriology a Doctrine of Salvation—Person of Christ—His Redemptive Work—The Christian Society Church—Subjective Character of his theology, though, makes Christ central—IV. Elements of permanent value: (1) Transforms method and scope of Dogmatics, (2) Emphasizes Social Consciousness, (3) Makes Redemption distinguishing feature of Christian Faith, and reality of Christ, (5) Claims Supremacy and Universality for Christianity - - - - - - - 277-295

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH

RITSCHL AND HIS SUCCESSORS

The School of Schleiermacher—Neander, Twesten, Ullmann, Müller, Schweizer—I. Ritschl—His scheme of Religion centres in three main ideas: (1) Redemption, a means to the Kingdom of God, (2) The Kingdom, the "summum

PAGES

bonum" of Christianity, (3) Centrality of Christ, who has the value of God—II. Ritschl's influence—Has given positive tone to Theology—His school concentrates on question, What is Christianity?—Views of Harnack, Kaftan, Troeltsch. III. Meaning of God in Modern Thought—Anthropocentric and Theocentric Theology—Schaeder's criticism of recent movements—"Experience Theology" of Erlangen School: Biblicists, Cremer and Kaehler—Position of Haering—Account of his *Christian Faith*—Qualification of Schaeder's view—Balfour's *Humanism and Theism*—Danger of "Religious Pragmatism"—Its Corrective—The sense in which "God is for us as well as we for Him" - - - - - - - - 296-317

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH

NEWMAN AND THE TRACTARIAN MOVEMENT

Spirit of Romanticism in England exercised two-fold influence—I. Oxford Movement, partly a political reaction, but also religious—II. The Personal Element—Leaders—Keble, the poet—*Christian Year*—Hurrell Froude, Man of Action—Froude's and Newman's visit to Rome—"Lead Kindly Light"—Keble's Sermon—Pusey, Scholar and Theologian—III. Newman, central figure, secret of influence—His Poetry, Sense of Mission, Intensity of Faith—IV. Object and Method of Movement—Restoration of Early Church—Chateaubriand—Newman's preaching—The Tracts—"Tract 90"—*Via Media*—Rome—V. Newman's after history—His Writings: *Apologia, Development of Christian Doctrine—Dream of Gerontius*—Agnosticism and Distrust of Reason—Nature of Authority and View of Church—VI. Estimate of Tractarianism—Subordinate place of Christ—Spread of Ritualism—Failed to touch leading minds - - - - - - - 318-343

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH

LIBERAL TENDENCIES IN BRITISH THOUGHT

Contemporaneous with Tractarianism—I. Influence of Coleridge—II. Whately and Arnold—The Hampden Controversy—III. Maurice, inaugurates a new era—"Christ in Every Man"—Eternal Life—Person and Atonement of Christ—Christian Socialism—Charles Kingsley—F. W. Robertson—Life and teaching—Independence—Sermons and Letters—The Sacrifice of Christ—IV. Erskine and McLeod Campbell—Erskine's Influence on Maurice—

PAGES

Freeness of Gospel—The Scottish Pulpit—Campbell's Protest against Calvinism—Bible higher than *Confessions* —Treatise on Atonement, an epoch-making work—Denney's Estimate—Scottish Theologians—V. *Essays and Reviews*—Authors—Dean Stanley's Defence—Mark Pattison and Jowett—Questions arising out of Essays: Inspiration, Eternal Punishment, Relation of Christianity to Heathen World and other Religions—*Ecce Homo* and *Lives of Christ*—*Lux Mundi*—The Synthesis of "High Church" and "Broad Church" - - - - 344-373

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH

RELIGIOUS TEACHERS OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

Dissatisfaction with Traditional Religion—I. Causes of Unrest (1) Unsatisfactory state of Philosophy, (2) Revolutionary Claims of Biblical Criticism, (3) Growth of Physical Science —Negative tendency—Francis Newman, Geo. Eliot, G. H. Lewes, J. A. Froude—II. Carlyle—Democracy and Hero-worship—Ethics of Right—"Natural Supernaturalism"—Doctrine of Symbols—Three Fundamental Truths: Reality of God, Mystery of Universe, Duty of Man—"Mud philosophies"—Carlyle as Pathfinder—His Exaggerations—Passion for Social Reform—Call to higher Idealism—III. John Ruskin—A Christian Teacher—His Masters: Tintoret, Carlyle, Turner—*Modern Painters*—The Law of Perfection—His Political Economy—*Unto this Last*—Life, true wealth—Matthew Arnold—*Essays in Criticism*—Theological Works—IV. Neo-Hegelianism—British Representatives—T. H. Green and his Gospel—Pragmatism and Activism—Wm. James and Bergson—Absolute and Relative Values —Mysticism—Miss Underhill—Union of Will and Vision 374-398

CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH

PAST AND PRESENT

Retrospect and outlook—Import of the War—I. The Legacy from the past—The Victorian Era, its shortcomings and merits—Influence of Darwinian Theory—Benjamin Kidd on the Pagan Cult of Force—Teaching of Haeckel and Nietzsche—Idealism evoked by the War—II. New factors of present situation—Meaning of Life—Revival of Religious Interest—In German Universities—France and Italy—"Modernism"—Philosophy of Bergson and Boutroux — Benedetto Croce — Russia — Teaching of

PAGES

Solovyof—Britain, renewed interest in Christian Truth—III. Dominant Problems of to-day—Awakening of historical sense—Influence on Critical and Dogmatic Questions—Christ as Synthesis of Objective and Subjective Religion—IV. Three main Ideas as Resultant of shaping forces—(1) *Conception of God*—Presence in Nature and Life—Divine Fatherhood, Providence and Sacrifice—Category of Love involving Idea of Personality—Views of Balfour, Pringle-Pattison, Sorley, Clement Webb—Union of Divine Immanence and Transcendence in Christ—(2) *Nature of Man*—Meaning of Sin—Soul's Affinity with God—Christ, Man's Clue and Crown—(3) New Accent on *Christ*—The Historical Jesus, the problem of to-day—The Heresy of Docetism—Divine Dynamic centring in Christ's redemptive power—Christian Ethics receives new importance from central position of Jesus—"Interimsethik"—Inwardness, Universality and Permanence of Christ's Teaching—Kingdom of God, the Social Ideal and Hope of the World—V. Morley and T. H. Green—Tennyson's vision of the Federation of Mankind 399-424

BOOKS OF REFERENCE - - - - - - - - 425

INDEX - - - - - - - - - - - - 437

I

FOUNDATIONAL TYPES

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CHAPTER I

THE SPIRITUAL RENASCENCE

It has been truly said, "There are no absolute origins in a continuous world." [1] No age is independent of its predecessors, and each period comes into being as a link in the sequence of events which stretches back into an indefinite past and forward into an equally indefinite future.

> "This day
> Washed Adam's feet and streams away
> Far into yon eternity."

Great men appear in great ages, but they are as much the creatures as the creators of their era. They come in the fullness of the time and enter a world that has long been prepared for them. They are the products of a life that has been growing and travailing till their birth. Their greatness lies in their power to seize the opportunity of the hour, and give voice to the speechless thoughts and inarticulate yearnings that have been long struggling in the hearts of men for expression.

The historian of to-day is not likely to underestimate the principle of continuity, but as little can he afford to disparage the creative element, the factor

[1] Sir Henry Jones, *Idealism as a Practical Creed*, p. 26.

of initiative and novelty which ever and anon breaks in upon the evolution of events, and invests the epoch of its advent with the prestige and potency of a new beginning. There are doubtless great moments in history, times of awakening and vision, when at the summons of the Spirit's breath, blowing where it listeth, and coming whence no one knows, the soul of man makes a fresh start and goes forth on a new venture.

In this sense it is hardly an exaggeration to say that a new world came into being with the great spiritual revival of the sixteenth century, to which history has assigned the title of the Protestant Reformation. It is true the very name implies a relation to a previous condition of faith, and suggests, rightly enough, a revolt against prevailing modes of belief and practice. But Protestantism stands for something far more positive. It is self-contained. No great movement can thrive on a spirit of negation. In every renascence of the spirit there is always something new, incalculable, and original. The secret of the Reformation is not in its destructive, but in its creative and constructive force. It came like its great prototype, not to destroy but to fulfil.

Of all the forces of modern times there are not any so potent or persistent as those which originate in this era. Protestantism created an environment of its own which was entirely different from the conditions prevalent before its advent. With its dawn the Middle Ages ended, and the modern epoch began. Ideals and purposes gradually appeared upon the mental horizon which gave a new content and trend to the spiritual history of man. The Christian faith as interpreted by the reformers has moulded and coloured all subsequent thought. And even such

tendencies as seemed to be most hostile to the spirit of Christianity would have taken another shape than they did if Protestantism had not been the vital and incisive power it was. It is not too much to say that the Reformation in its broadest sense has been the anointing soul of the modern world and the mightiest moral force in its progress. The greatest thinkers and poets in the succeeding centuries, even those who have not been specially religious writers, have usually acknowledged their debt to its impulse. Every phase of thought, indeed, not directly or indirectly connected with the spiritual uplift which Protestantism has given to mankind, is felt to have in it something unreal and alien, and is destined to oblivion.

While few writers, with the exception of Catholic partisans and a small group of High Church Anglicans, are disposed to minimise the epochal significance of the Reformation, there is a considerable variety of opinion as to its immediate causes, and more particularly regarding its essential nature and abiding effects. Historians, of whom Guizot is an eminent type, have described the religious revolution of the sixteenth century as principally an uprising of the people against priestly authority, incited by their indignation at the unchecked immoralities of the clergy and the growing corruptions of the Church. Baur, and the men of his school, see in the movement a " moment " or factor of a larger spiritual development, which had been furthered by a series of subsidiary events in the realms of literature and science, and attained its fullness of expression as the outcome or resultant of diverse forces. Ernst Troeltsch [1]

[1] Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress*, p. 18 ff. See also the larger work, *Die Social-lehren der Christichen Kirchen*, pp. 427 ff.

regards the significance of Protestantism to lie in its emphasis upon religious individualism, and the gradual extension of this principle to the entire range of common life. As opposed to the Catholic idea of authority, it set up the idea of independence, which resulted in a constantly growing individualization of conviction, theory, and practical aim. In its initial stage Protestantism, he holds, was simply a modification of Catholicism, the substitution of an infallible book for an infallible Church, and cannot, therefore, be said to have directly paved the way for the modern world. But ultimately, when loosed from its connection with a hierarchic world-dominating institution, it gathered up into itself all that was most progressive in civilization, and in virtue of its growing toleration, begotten of the principle of individuality, it was able to amalgamate its interests as time went on with the aims and activities of secular life. Finally, there are others, like the late Principal Lindsay, the most recent historian of the Reformation, who have interpreted the inner reason of the movement as the expression of a personal sense of need for peace of conscience before God, which could only be brought about by a reaffirmation of the scriptural truth of Justification by Faith—a need which found its most typical instance and most powerful advocate in the person of Luther, but for whose protest, humanly speaking, there would have been no Reformation.[1]

The probability is that not one of these causes, but all of them together, were operative in giving meaning to the Reformation. Bishop Stubbs justly lays stress upon the combination of circumstances out of which the Revival sprang. " The accumulation at one point of time of so many various influences in

[1] *A History of the Reformation*, pp. 189-193.

one direction; the contemporaneous fruit-bearing of a quantity of growths that had been advancing with no mutual acquaintance for ages; the co-operation in the same work of the mistakes and vices of the Popes; the lusts, avarices, and ambitions of princes; the learning of the one side and the ignorance of the other; the almost accidental appearance of some of the most powerful causes, occasions, and influences—the coincidence of all these things make a problem which philosophy cannot account for. We can but say with humility, 'It was so, for the time was ripe.'"[1]

Three main influences may be singled out as of special importance in determining the character and subsequent course of the movement. The first may be described as Evangelical and Mystical; the second, Intellectual and Humanistic; the third, to be dealt with in the next chapter, may be styled the Personal Element.

I

1. It is difficult to mark the beginnings of the spiritual awakening. Early in the thirteenth century there were mutterings of dissatisfaction in regard to the all-absorbing might and arrogance of the Roman hierarchy. The most remarkable of these protests is connected with the name of Joachim of Flora. Under the title of the *Eternal Gospel*, Joachim's book struck at the very roots of the Papal system. By the beginning of the fourteenth century the revolutionary character of the new teaching was manifest in many lands. Numerous sects, mainly the offspring of the Franciscan Order, sprang up; all of which, the Albigenses, Fratricelli, Lollards, Apostolic Brethren,

[1] *Lectures on European History*, p. 66.

and many others, bore witness to the quiet workings in men's hearts of spiritual needs, which the traditions of Rome seemed powerless to satisfy. The aims of these early agitations found expression in the teaching of the "Evangelical Reformers," of whom Wyclif in England, Huss in Bohemia, and Savonarola in Italy, were the most illustrious. Great as were their differences, they were alike in many of their beliefs and methods. They shared the conviction that there dwelt within the soul of man an intimate kinship with God and a profound capacity for divine truth; and that the preaching of the Gospel was the most effective means of spiritual culture. Wyclif translated the Scriptures into the vernacular; and the best work he said a priest could do—better even than administering the sacraments—was to make the Bible plain to the people. He was followed both in England and on the Continent by a large body of enthusiasts. Preaching became from this time an important element in diffusing the principles of Evangelical truth. The newly translated Bible read in its freshness and novelty, and expounded by a band of earnest itinerants, produced wonderful effects. Under the spell of the spoken word the people were moved as they had never been by the pomp and ritual of the Church. From the time of Wyclif one can see how Christian thought was tending, and how both without and within the orthodox Communion, there was growing in the hearts of men a more vivid consciousness of the reality of God.

2. Along with the evangelical element just noted, a strong Mystical current, which is a distinctive and most beautiful feature of mediæval Christianity, tended in the same direction. In the teachings of Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Victor of Paris, Bonaventura, and of

Thomas Aquinas himself, we detect a strain of mystic longing after a more intimate realization of the Divine Presence. But it was more especially the German Mystics of the fourteenth century who first sought to give definite expression to the idea of the Immanence of God—a conception which has powerfully affected the spirit of Protestant Theology. The Mystics did not constitute a sect without the Church, but were simply a number of isolated thinkers who, in spite of diversity of thought and style, were one in declaring that God dwells within the soul, and that he who cannot find Him there is not likely to discover Him elsewhere. Joannes Eckhart (1260-1327), an immediate disciple of Albert the Great, St. Thomas's master, a Dominican of pure life and unworldly character, is of all the Mystics the most clear and explicit in regard to the relation of God and man. "God," he says,[1] "is alike near in all creatures. I have a power in my soul which enables me to perceive God. Nothing is so near me as God. He is nearer to me than I am to myself." Eckhart's fundamental position is: "God and Being are one and the same thing. God is in all things and all places alike, and is ready to give Himself as we are ready to receive Him." The influence of Neo-Platonism is clearly manifest in the teaching of Eckhart, but his unswerving devotion to Catholic Christian traditions is undoubted. The Mystics were not deterred by fear of Pantheism from giving bold expression to their conviction of the all-pervasiveness of the Deity. The omnipresent reality of God, they held, intensified rather than suppressed the individuality and freedom of the human spirit.

[1] Eckhart's Sermons, translated by Miss Winkworth. See also Dorner, *Person of Christ*, vol. ii. pp. 1-50, for account of German Mysticism.

Eckhart lays frequent stress upon the independence of the individual soul. "Can God understand *Himself* without my soul?" The doctrine of Divine Immanence, as taught by the later adherents of the school—Tauler, Suso, Ruysbrœk—involved the corresponding truth that the soul in which God abides must be in its inmost essence akin to the divine nature. God is not related externally to man, but is internally present in all his intuitions and desires.

Unlike the Evangelical Reformers, the Mystics attached more importance to the doctrine of the Inner Light than to the Revelation of Scripture. Guidance in the affairs of daily life they derived, not so much from the outward Word as the inward illumination of the Spirit. They had little interest in political agitation, and less in the overthrow of the Church's organization. But their influence was not less effective because it was exercised in a gentle and almost unconscious way. Without political or ecclesiastical aim the object of Tauler and his brethren was to proclaim a religious principle which would bind together all spiritually-minded men and win them to the service of love. The order of "Friends of God," instituted by Eckhart, sums up the spirit and purpose of German mysticism. It spread widely throughout the southern states, having for its object not merely the culture of individual piety, but also the spirit of brotherly help. In Holland a similar fraternity with like aims arose—"The Brethren of the Common Life." To this society belonged Thomas à Kempis, the author of the *Imitatio Christi*, a book which has had a larger circulation than any other save the Bible.

These early movements would have been insufficient of themselves to effect the transformation which Luther

and his co-workers afterwards achieved; but they prepared the ground; and the elevation of thought and life which they embodied gave a distinctive flavour and quality to the character of the Protestant revival. The mystical teachers acted as solvents of Catholicism, and were unconscious heralds of the Reformation. How far the great mass of the people were ready for the message of Luther it is perhaps difficult to say; but the strong support which he immediately received and the enormous demand for books bearing on the new faith, point to widespread popular sympathy behind him.

3. Along with the evangelical movements just mentioned, the manifest and undisguised corruption of the Church contributed not a little to the same end. The need of reform had been admitted even before the Council of Constance, and some efforts were made from within to effect it, but they were superficial and half-hearted. A few years before Luther's actual protest there arose from many parts of the land a bitter cry of indignation against the rapacity of the clergy. According to the testimony of contemporary writers, "there was no justice in the spiritual courts, no discipline in regard to morals, no knowledge of Scripture, no reverence for divine things, and hardly a vestige of genuine religion."[1] The laity, who might not be able to understand the niceties of doctrine, but could appreciate honesty and cleanness of life, became more and more intolerant of the insatiable greed and shameless vice of their teachers. But the people had no power either in Church or State, and they were becoming aware of the fact. The Reformation has been indeed aptly called "the advent of the power of

[1] See Ballarmin, *Opera*, vol. vi. quoted by Guericke Kircheng, vol. iii. p. 4, and Baur, vol. iv.

the middle classes." The whole future of Europe would have been very different had the papacy proceeded with sincerity to set its own house in order and remove its more palpable abuses. But the very blindness of the Church to its own interests and its determination to silence every dissentient voice, became one of the most effectual means of bringing about those civil liberties and democratic principles which even those who regret the schism caused by the Reformation, admit to be not the least of the contributions of Protestantism to the modern world.

II

The full significance of the Reformation in relation to modern thought is apt to be missed unless emphasis is laid upon the fact that it was something more than a religious revolt which became articulate in Luther. It is hardly too much to say that without the liberalizing spirit of the age even the personality and protest of the reformer would have been powerless to effect the political and social transformations with which his name is identified.

The second great influence to be noted is chiefly intellectual in its nature. It is the reawakening of the mind of Europe, known in history as the "Renaissance."[1] This movement marks the transition from the Middle Ages to the Modern World, and comprehends within it a new attitude and outlook of mental vision. Instigated at first by a passionate devotion to the rich humanity reflected in the literature of Greece, it was really a revolt from the intellectual

[1] Cp. Burckhardt's *Civilisation of Period of Renaissance*; Pater, *The Renaissance*; Symonds, *The Renaissance*; and Lecky's *History of Rationalism*.

tyranny and cloistered seclusion of Scholasticism, and a return to the joyous independence and exuberance of life which classical culture seemed to offer. But the Renaissance is not to be understood as a mere return to antiquity. It represents, even more, a new and positive development of spiritual life. The rediscovery of the treasures of Greece was but an element in the movement whose influence permeated every domain of life and knowledge. At the impulse of the new spirit the sciences had their birth. The invention of printing gave wings to knowledge. The discovery of America and the passage of the Cape of Good Hope, to India, and the far Orient, disclosed undreamt-of possibilities and unsealed the springs of adventure and romance. It is hardly possible to fix a definite date for the beginning of the Renaissance. Even before the close of the dark ages there were solitary thinkers who anticipated the dawn. Italy was the first land to hail the light, but it spread speedily to France, Germany, and England. To Dante and Petrarch may be ascribed the honour of imparting the earliest spiritual impulse to the movement. But the idealism of the poets gradually transfigured all the arts; and literature, painting, and architecture, revived and revealed new potencies of the spirit.[1]

There was a freshness of springtide and the lure of untried horizons in this period. With the joyous confidence of youth, man turned to the boundless future, and was eager to match his newly unfettered strength with the untamed forces of the external

[1] While this view of the Renaissance is generally supported by Mr. Symonds and Walter Pater, Michelet and others, W. S. Lilly takes a less favourable view. See *Chapters in European History*, vol. i. chap. iv., "The Renaissance and Liberty," where he contends that the age was one of servility and imitation, and not one of "a new birth unto liberty."

world. It was an era of wonder and enquiry. Man felt an irresistible longing to bring every possible sphere of existence within his reach. He took the earth as his property and found its potences and spaces no longer overpowering.

The discovery of the external world had its counterpart in man's discovery of himself. Here, for the first time, says Hegel, the individual came to self-consciousness. Personality was the new note of the period. The soul of man was thrilled before all else with a passionate desire for self-realization. Unperturbed by moral considerations, man determined to make all things contribute to his enrichment. Genius, skill, initiative, and creative imagination burst forth. Everywhere the moulding hand of art was visible ; and grace, beauty, and radiance of spirit, begotten of a sense of freedom, began to pervade human existence.

But the Renaissance presents also strange anomalies and contrasts. With its intellectual fervour and artistic purpose there is united a lack of mental balance and restraint of passion. It is the era of Erasmus and Montaigne, of Calvin and Rabelais, of Galileo and Paracelsus. Sorcery and science, scepticism and credulity, licence and asceticism commingle. When the surging energies of life were claiming dominion over the external world, it is not wonderful that many should yield to unbridled imagination,[1] and magic and witchcraft should tend to override the saner pursuits of the mind. Nevertheless, the very complexity of thought and tendency, so far from contracting life, really enlarged it, and brought enrichment to almost

[1] For example, the licentiousness of some of " the new Latinists," such as Pontanus and Pacificus Maximus, quoted by Lilly, *op. cit.* p. 275.

every realm of human activity. Nor did it fail to affect, in a definite way, the attitude of man to the spiritual world. It was inevitable that by its emphasis on the right of free enquiry, it should tend to weaken the power of Papal authority and promote the cause of Protestantism. The mediæval system of feudalism began to break up, and the demand of democracy, for political freedom, to find voice.

In its earlier stages, however, the Renaissance had little in common with the more positive ideals of Christianity. It is true there were some men, distinguished in literature and art, among others, Michael Angelo, Raphael, Rico della Mirandola, and Ficino, who retained the simplicity of their Christian faith, and sought to reconcile the aspirations of Humanism with the claims of Religion. But for the most part the revival of letters did not abate but rather increased the licence of the age. Laying stress in its first crude form on the legitimacy of all natural desires, Humanism too often displaced the strict asceticism of the Church by unbridled freedom, and substituted the cult of pagan art for self-effacing loyalty to God.

The early history of the Renaissance is a striking confirmation of the truth that art and culture of themselves are poor substitutes for religion. The general temper and atmosphere of the times were by no means favourable to spirituality of life. The mass of the people were sunken in superstition, while the higher and more educated classes were for the most part alienated from all ecclesiastical authority. A few speculative natures, such as Nicholas of Cusa and Giordano Bruno, soared above all visible and finite forms, and sought to harmonize the loftier elements of life and thought with a kind of universal pantheism. But fruitful as were these metaphysical speculations

for later philosophy, their influence upon the immediate problems of religious life was slight. The early environments of the Renaissance were unsuitable for the culture of the spiritual side of the movement, and it was inevitable that in Italy, at least, the adherents of the Reformation should be few.

In the northern countries of Europe to which the enthusiasm spread, the religious element became dominant and more pronounced. In Germany, France, and England, the Renaissance was the handmaid and ally of the reformed faith ; and some of the most valiant champions of the Protestant cause were also ardent devotees of the New Learning. Biblical study and Oriental research were assiduously cultivated. To name but a few men who were at once notable leaders of Protestantism and distinguished scholars—Erasmus, Melanchthon, Reuchlin ; and even Zwingli and Calvin were deeply tinged with the spirit of Humanism.

To minimise the religious aspect of the Renaissance and see in it nothing but a secular manifestation is, however, to misread history and fail to seize the inner significance of the event. It can hardly be doubted that but for its leavening and liberalizing spirit the religious revival would have been neither so effective nor so widespread and lasting in its results as it was. It would probably have degenerated into a fanatical agitation, or dwindled down to a local and ephemeral episode. The Divine Spirit employs various means and different kinds of men in the working of His purposes. It is here, therefore, that the significance of a man like Erasmus is revealed. He has been blamed for his coolness and neutrality. Luther himself denounced him as a traitor and arch-enemy of Christ. It is true he lacked the warmth of his intrepid con-

temporary, and he had not in him the making of a Christian martyr. Though by no means hostile, his sympathies lay with the negative rather than the positive side of the Protestant creed. He possessed neither the rugged strength nor the passionate vehemence which the crisis seemed to demand. He regarded Luther's attitude as an outburst of ill-considered revolt with no vitality or guiding principle in it. Hence his own position became one of compromise. He tried to please both parties, with the usual result that he pleased neither. After a brilliant career of literary fame, he earned for himself an old age of calumny and abuse. But it would be entirely an error to underestimate the influence of the great humanist. He did a work which Luther could not have done. By his writings he, more than most, fostered and furthered the real life of the movement. By his *Colloquia*, his masterpiece, and his unsparing denunciations of the abuses of the Church and the habits of the clergy, he did a pioneer's work, rendering the decisive action of the reformer at once the more necessary and the less difficult. His publication of the annotated New Testament, virtually the first critical Greek text, did much to discredit the frivolous and pedantic methods of Scholastic interpretation and to inaugurate a more rational and reverent understanding of Holy Scripture. Those critics who brand Erasmus as a coward forget the courage of his heroic attack on the militarism of the contemporary monarchs, Henry VIII. and Charles V. Nor do those who charge him with inconsistency give him sufficient credit for acting under the persuasion that a gradual and peaceful reform of the Church was possible. In this he failed, indeed, for it is not thus that reforms are usually wrought in this world. But a man of mere negations he was not, nor was his life-

work wholly a failure. Luther has been lauded as the sole creative force of his day. But Erasmus did a work, inferior it may be to that of Luther, yet also fruitful and constructive. He prepared the way for the gradual evolution of modern thought. The transfusion of Humanist culture into sacred learning was revealed most markedly in the liberal theology of the next century, and was reflected in the piety and breadth of such men as Hales, Chillingworth, Whichcote, Henry More, and Jeremy Taylor, who inherited the spirit of Erasmus' teaching, which he bequeathed to the University of Cambridge, where he acted for a time as Professor of Divinity. Much that Luther said of Erasmus in bitterness, was unjust and untrue. It would have been well, indeed, if the reformer had possessed some of the refinement and grace of the humanist. And he strangely failed to see how great were his own obligations to him. It is hardly an exaggeration to say with Froude that, "without Erasmus, Luther would have been impossible." In the building of bridges some stones must be laid deep down under the stream, invisible; and that is the fate of many a toiler whose task has seemed to himself, and even to his contemporaries, a failure.

If the essence of Humanism is, as Walter Pater says, the belief that nothing that has ever interested living men and women can wholly lose its vitality, then we may well believe that this aspect of the revival of life and thought which took place in the fifteenth century must not be overlooked in any attempt to estimate the creative forces of the modern world. The two chief factors of Protestantism, the Reformation and the Renaissance, must not be regarded as rivals; nor must either be interpreted as merely

cause or effect of the other. They are really the blended constituents of one broad stream of influence which has affected and formed the entire personality of the modern man, the mind not less than the heart, the intellectual as well as the emotional powers of humanity.

The significance of the Renaissance lies more, indeed, in what it designed than in what it achieved. Much that it aspired to do was only accomplished in after centuries. What was really given at this time was the initiatory impulse. It remained for a later age to reconcile Christian faith with scientific research and, with a growing appreciation of the meaning of history and the principle of development, to realise that knowledge and beauty, science and art, everything indeed that can enrich and enlighten the spirit of man, is not inimical, but tributary to the harmony and fullness of the Christian life.

It is narrated,[1] says the graceful author of the *Renaissance,* that when the shipload of sacred earth from the soil of Jerusalem was mingled with the common clay of the Campo Sancto at Pisa, a new flower grew up from it unlike any that man had seen before—a flower of rarely-blended colours and rich complexity of tissues. And just such a flower of exquisite wealth and profusion there has grown up through the succeeding ages, by the mixture and harmony of all these varied interests and aspirations, whose birth marks the beginnings of modern European thought.

If, however, the Reformation, upon whose foundation the modern world has been reared, cannot rightly be understood without some account of the religious movements and intellectual activities prior to and contemporaneous with it; as little can its

[1] Walter Pater, *The Renaissance,* p. 219.

meaning for the future be apprehended apart from the consideration of the character and work of the leaders in whom it became embodied. To this aspect of the subject the next chapter is devoted.

CHAPTER II

THE PIONEERS OF PROTESTANTISM

In a well-known passage, Carlyle inveighs against the tendency of historians to disparage the function and originality of heroes. "Speak to any small man," he says, "of a high majestic Reformation and of a high majestic Luther, and forthwith he sets about accounting for it; how 'the circumstances of the times' called for such a character, and found him, we suppose, girt and ready, to do its errand; how the circumstances of the times created, fashioned, floated him quietly along into the result." Some modern writers go even further and eliminate the personal factor altogether. In great events they see but the working of natural forces, and assume that revolutions gratuitously occur as inevitable factors in a causal sequence without the faintest recognition of the initiative of any hero or leader whatsoever. Carlyle himself, however, does not overlook the "circumstances of the times." On the contrary, it is because the hero is the "true son of Nature and Fact," is "open to the divine significance of life"; because, in short, he sees deeper and knows more than ordinary people, that he is a hero and is able to do the work which he feels must be done. The hero is "the critical

truth of every experience." In other words, it is the human element that underlies and explains the facts of history. Within every great movement, gathering up its diverse elements and focussing it, there is the will, the inspiration, the creative and controlling impulse of some outstanding personality.

History is apt to become for us a crowded and confused nexus of forces that act and react in endless variety and unceasing change, unless we fix our eyes upon these single prominent figures who stand out of the tangle of events and hold together the influences they illustrate and embody. It is not merely that in the action of great men we see the age "writ small." In the truest sense these men are the makers of their times. History knows nothing of revolutions apart from living personalities. Every age needs its prophet. The movement which we call the "Reformation" cannot be accounted for by the "circumstances of the times" alone. The motive-power came through leaders who were in communion with the unseen. The true reformer is not simply a product of his environment. It is his to conceive the purposes and set on high the ideals that are to guide and shape his own and future generations.

Of the leaders of the Reformation there stand out three pre-eminently—Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin. The first was a German; the second, a Swiss; the third, a Frenchman. Luther represents the Religious, Zwingli the Ethical, and Calvin the Theological aspect of the movement. The first contends for the individuality and freedom of faith; the second vindicates the rights of reason and the universality of conscience; the third essays the task of systematizing the doctrines of the Christian faith. While Luther

emphasises the subjectivity of religion, Zwingli dwells upon the universality and immanence of God, and Calvin lays stress on the objective character of religious truth formulating the doctrine of Divine sovereignty and pre-determination.

Though Zwingli was the earliest in the field and, as Humanist and scholar, the most liberal and gracious of the reformers, it will not be necessary to dwell upon his distinctive views. His influence was for the most part confined to the scene of his labours; and, except in regard to the Eucharist controversy, his doctrinal position does not materially differ from that afterwards adopted by one or other of his co-religionists.

Luther and Calvin call for fuller treatment, since they represent two streams of tendency which owe their strength and character to the difference of attitude and outlook of their authors. In more than one period of later history the personal influence of these men is manifest; and Lutherism and Calvinism are still to be reckoned with as vital forces of religious thought.

I

In the personality of Luther the Reformation received its first actual embodiment. All the spiritual currents that swept through Germany became flesh and blood in him. He was the soul of the movement. "Between ourselves," said Goethe to a friend, "there is nothing interesting in the whole Reformation except the character of Luther." To him belongs the honour of really leading the people forth from the house of bondage. When he burned the Pope's Bull in 1520 he struck the first blow for freedom, and

when he declared at the Diet of Worms that he could not retract at the dictate of earthly authority, he sounded the first note of the Imperative of Conscience. It is true, as we have seen, he had his predecessors,—"the little grey company before the pioneers." But in courage and originality he stood alone. And though he speedily gained the support of the people and even the patronage of princes, there is a splendour and pathos about that solitary figure, a miner's son and humble monk, confronting alone the proud dignitaries of Church and State, which makes an irresistible appeal to the imagination. His lowly origin may have helped him to an understanding of the people's need. It may account also for a certain element of coarseness and indelicacy in language and writings which offends the modern taste. But his very bluntness of speech and lack of finer feeling were but the expression of that ruggedness of character and doggedness of temper which made the man the fit instrument required of the time and the task. It is but fair to say that ambition did not seem to form a part of his constitution. He had no idea of posing as a leader. He had little talent for organization, and did not desire to separate himself from the Church. He only protested at first against such errors as seemed to vitiate the purity of the Gospel. Like many another pioneer he did not perceive whither he was being borne. It was enough that he was the champion of a cause that had been committed to him by a higher Power. This want of foresight was at once the strength and weakness of Luther's position. It gave to the new cause a concrete personal character which quickly gained the enthusiastic sympathy of those who, in all ages, are moved by the passionate daring and indignation of a fellow-man. On the other hand, it stamped the new order with an

individualistic and sectarian character which made it seem mean and insignificant in contrast to the imposing structure of the Catholic Church. To Luther the Church was simply the mystic body of Christ; and it was enough that believers should find in their common allegiance to their Lord an all-sufficing bond. He overlooked the fact that without the aid of some objective form of cohesion mere inward devotion is apt to grow dim and faint. It is true that in place of the authority of the Church Luther set up the authority of the Bible; and in faith in, and loyalty to, the Christ as revealed in the word of God he proclaimed the great principle of the unity of believers, which ultimately became the true basis and bulwark of the Protestant Church.

Luther turned to the Bible not to expose the errors of Papacy but rather to discover what religion really meant for man. "How can I, a poor sinner, find peace with God?" This personal question became for him the one pressing problem that haunted him day and night. Luther was as little a dogmatic theologian as he was an ecclesiastic. He cared even less for consistency of doctrine than efficiency of organization. Viewed from the standpoint of formal theology his utterances are not free from error and exaggeration; but regarded simply as the words of a man of earnest instincts, to which he often gave unguarded expression, they reveal him as the spokesman of those primal yearnings of the human heart which are unconsciously groping after a knowledge of the living God. The battle of the Reformer was not merely a battle for correct theoretic understanding of the truth, but a struggle for personal assurance. In the cloisters of Erfurt he imagined he was fighting with and for himself alone. Though he knew it not, he was wrestling

for the birthright of humanity. The same experience which St. Paul underwent this man shared; and out of his own bitter conflict he won that faith in the living God which became the burden of all his teaching and the watchword of the new adventure.

The greatness of Luther lies in his rediscovery of God. He brought men back to the fountain-head of religion—to the divine Being who speaks to the conscience of man in the language of mercy and peace. His message to Christendom was the triumphant assurance that God, as revealed in Christ, is a Being on whom man can absolutely rely for salvation.

The definite result for Christian thought of Luther's manifesto was the recovery and assertion of two great evangelical truths which have ever since been cardinal and distinctive tenets of Protestantism. The first was the Pauline doctrine of "Justification by Faith." This truth, long buried beneath the debris of mediaeval dogma, Luther brought forth and minted anew so that it became for himself and others the living symbol of the new relation in which the believer in Christ stands to God. The relationship is no longer one in which man earns divine favour by toilsome works of merit. It is rather a personal attitude of trust in which the sinner surrenders himself in unconditional homage to an all-gracious God. The believer identifies himself with Christ, and points to His sacrifice as that which he would fain offer, as the measure and ideal of his faith and aspiration. And God, on His side, accepts the offering of faith and, clothing the penitent in Christly beauty, sees him no more as he is in himself, but transfigured and "justified" by the vision and ideal of holiness which faith has made her own. What we believe we are. Faith has in it the power of a new loyalty.

The second truth which Luther reaffirmed flows naturally from the first. It is what Luther has called "The Freedom of a Christian Man." It is the chief characteristic of the new life of faith. "Freedom," says Melanchthon, "*is* Christianity." The Christian, lifted above his old limitations and fears, has come to himself, and is conscious of all the rights and obligations of personality. No longer burdened with a sense of sin, the believer possesses the joyous certitude and independence of spirit which belongs, as Paul affirms, to the sons of God. He whom Christ makes free is thenceforth entirely free. For him the Law is as non-existent, since he does the divine will with spontaneity and delight. Christian liberty is no merely negative thing, not the bare feeling of emancipation, but the triumph of a man over himself and the world through the positive knowledge that God is within him as the inspiration and dynamic force of his life, He is no longer a bondsman but a son, free of his Father's House, the sharer of His thoughts, the co-worker in His purposes.

It would be difficult in a few words to state all that the reassertion of these two truths meant for Christendom. It was in effect a re-publication of Christianity. It was a return from the despotic rule and dualistic morality of mediaevalism to the simplicity and directness of the Gospel. It was the liberation at once of the intelligence and will of the individual. By the restatement of these truths Luther not only brought immediate assurance and hope to the believer, but he struck at the root of the whole Catholic conception of the world, and set the Christian the task of verifying his religion amid the ordinary affairs of the earth. By exalting Christ to be the sole norm and ideal of life he broke down the wall of partition between the

secular and the sacred, which mediaeval thought had built up. Moreover, he emancipated the social institutions of the family and the State from the sole guardianship of the Church, asserting the liberty of the Christian to live his own life, and order his conduct according to the dictates of his conscience. It has been said that Protestantism secularized the Church. It would be more correct to say it spiritualized common life. It affirmed that the world is God's world, and that all the interests and activities of man may be consecrated to divine ends.

The assertion of the principle of individuality and spiritual freedom has been fraught with far-reaching consequences for the world. Art, poetry, literature, music, science, gradually found their legitimate place in the Christian life. Under the fostering care of Protestantism the ancient seats of learning acquired new life, and new universities sprang into being all over Europe, which gave fresh scope to scholarship and talent. It is true that culture, especially in Germany and the northern countries, suffered seriously from the blight of the Thirty Years' War, which immediately succeeded the Reformation; but with the eighteenth century there came a revival of thought which gave a new impulse, especially in France and Germany, to literature and philosophical speculation.

Stupendous as was the task achieved by Luther, he was not without his limitations. He restored faith to its central place in religious experience, and by emancipating the conscience from the trammels of ecclesiastical authority, he gave a new value to the individual. Yet the very greatness of the problem by which he was confronted reveals his shortcomings. By an extravagant defence of faith as opposed to works, he opened the door for all kinds of moral

laxity and religious indifferentism. He was really, though not intentionally, a mediaeval exegete; and while professing to accept Scripture as the sole rule of faith, he did not hesitate to interpret it by arbitrary canons of his own. He was unable to rid himself of the methods of Scholasticism and, like many of the other reformers, he retained in his teaching a considerable admixture of Catholic doctrine.

The sixteenth century was a period of intellectual confusion. Under the stress of a far-reaching spiritual upheaval there was little room for the exercise of dispassionate judgment. The cast of Luther's mind was not philosophical. He did not possess the mental acumen of Melanchthon or Erasmus. We look in vain therefore to the German reformer for an intelligent criticism of the doctrines of the Latin Church. In retaining some and discarding others he seems to have been actuated partly by individual bias and partly by traditional usage. Though a professed champion of freedom, he grew apparently, as time went on, distrustful of the intellect, regarding it as the prop of self-righteous pride. Ultimately he hardened himself against reason in all its forms, accepting the most extravagant absurdities as marks of divine wisdom. His Table-Talk reveals a delightful vein of homely sagacity and mother wit; while many of his commentaries, particularly that on Galatians, contain statements of evangelical truth which have enriched Christian experience. Though he wrote his own language with force and purity, his productions in Latin are wanting in distinction. With the exception of his hymns, in many of which there is a simple dignity of expression and devoutness of feeling hardly excelled in that class of poetry, his writings generally are negligible and now little read; and, according to

so eminent an authority as Harnack, " present a confused and unsatisfactory picture of theological consistency." The amazing influence of his personality upon the revolution of the age has produced an exaggerated notion of his intellectual greatness. There did not seem to exist in him the irresistible impulse of the thinker for theoretic clearness, nor the student's quenchless thirst after truth for its own sake. He never seems to have broken away from the bondage of the letter, nor to have emancipated himself completely from the order of ideas amid which he had grown up. He frequently retains the old Scholastic language, and takes over without question most of the dogmas of Latin theology. While he contends for what he calls " the Freedom of the Christian man," he does not hesitate to deny the freedom of the human will, and assert the utter inability of the natural man to do the right or seek the good.

Our concern is mainly with the theological significance of Luther's life and not with his personal or private character. Some reference, however, to the strictures recently made upon the Reformer's moral life and action, is here called for. It seems hardly doubtful, from all the evidence now available, that as time went on some deterioration in regard both to conviction and practice took place. Without dwelling upon the charges of immorality that have been made, but not substantiated, it is difficult to justify the sudden change of attitude towards the people whose rights and liberties the Reformer at first so valiantly defended. From being the trusted friend and adviser of the down-trodden peasantry, he abruptly became the champion of clerical and princely tyranny, urging the rulers to persecute and ill-treat the very class whose revolt he had largely incited. In a pamphlet

still extant, the object of which was to hound on the nobles to crush the masses, Luther wrote, "Let no one take pity on the infuriated peasants. . . . Every one who can, should strike, stab, strangle, slay them, as if they were mad dogs." In later years he boasted of his share in the massacre. "I, Martin Luther, have in the Peasant's revolt, slain all the peasants that were killed. . . . But the responsibility is with the Lord, my God." It is, as Principal Lindsay says, "an ineffaceable stain on Luther." It seems something of an exaggeration, however, to attribute to him, as some writers have done, the creation of the spirit and temper of modern Germany, which is responsible for the ruthlessness and brutality of the recent war. With all his vast prestige and power growing through the centuries, it is yet difficult to believe that the Reformer had a far-reaching and malevolent influence in shaping the character of the German war-lords and their docile subjects.

Language like this seems childish and begotten of blind and petty prejudice. Luther was no deep-plotting Machiavelli. He was for the most part a man of simple piety and humble ways. He had his faults. He was amenable to flattery. He was rough, passionate, and obstinate. He was, moreover, the child of his age—an age which was only slowly emerging from the darkness of savagery and superstition. He wielded a mighty influence on his own and succeeding generations. But the sphere of his influence was not political but religious. The main spirit and trend of his teachings was very different from that which has been assigned to it by those who see in him the progenitor of Prussian statecraft. The downfall of Germany to-day has come about, not because the agents of it were pupils of Luther, but because, on the

contrary, they mocked and despised those great truths of faith and freedom of which the Reformer at his best was the champion and exponent.

Luther's merit as a religious teacher consists in the stress he laid upon the individuality of man. The full meaning of that truth for the modern world, though implicit in the Reformer's attitude of protest, was only gradually evolved. Luther's own outlook upon life, as was perhaps inevitable, remained partial and contracted. He approached the problem of man's relation to God from the subjective side. His theology, to use modern language, is anthropocentric. In combating the transcendental standpoint of Mediævalism he went to the opposite extreme and interpreted the religious life in terms of human feeling and need alone.

This one-sided subjectivity is the defect of Lutheran religious thought generally; a defect which has been accentuated from Schleiermacher's time onwards in later German theology. It is a tendency to exalt the inner at the expense of the outer life. While it rightly lays emphasis on the truth that the Kingdom of God is within, it tends to the implication that it is only there. The truth which does not commend itself to the heart of the individual and is received on outward authority alone, is practically not received at all and has no power over the life. But, on the other hand, it is not less important to remember that truth is not a thing of the individual heart alone; it has independent and absolute value, and can only be apprehended by us as truth when it is conceived as an object separate from the mind which knows it. The Lutheran principle of individualism required to be corrected by the Calvinistic conception of Divine sovereignty. Greatly as the world of religious thought is indebted

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to Luther, his influence would have been neither so effective nor far-reaching had it not been supplemented and crowned by the labours of Calvin.

II

Though in point of time belonging to a later generation than Luther and Zwingli, Calvin was no mere builder on other men's foundations. He ranks as one of the foremost leaders in the struggle, whose influence has been at least equal to, if not greater, than that of the German reformer. These two men may be regarded as the poles around which the currents of religious thought and action have circled. Their work was complementary. Yet each stood for a separate and independent type of piety and church polity. Luther was the father of Lutheranism, which has been mostly confined to German-speaking people; Calvin was the author of the so-called Reformed Theology which has spread throughout the whole world.

It is not without significance that while Luther was of German nationality, Calvin was by birth and education a Frenchman; indeed, the first notable Protestant not of Teutonic speech. The two leaders differed temperamentally as well as racially. In almost every respect the pale meagre sharp-featured Frenchman was a contrast to the heavy full-blooded German. By nature the latter was emotional, impulsive, mystical; the former, intellectual, methodical, unimaginative. Luther was a man of the people, democratic, sympathetic; Calvin was aristocratic, reserved, austere. If Luther lacked the Frenchman's organizing talent, Calvin was deficient in the German's gift of popular appeal. While the Wittenberg reformer was endowed with penetrative shrewdness and robust

understanding, the Genevan leader possessed a sense of logical consistency and keenness of judgment. Calvin, like Melanchthon, was an enthusiast in his early years for Humanism, and was thus able to enlist on his side much of the learning and culture of the age. He exercised an influence upon the French language similar to that of Luther on the German. Trained as a jurist, moreover, he brought the lawyer's clarity of mind and instinct for method into the service of his mission.

It has been customary to regard Calvin principally as a theologian; and as such he has produced a type of doctrine which was unchallenged for more than a century after his time, and to this day has left its mark upon every department of Protestant thinking. But his influence as an ecclesiastic has been even more decisive. As a dogmatist he is in some measure indebted to others; as the creator of a new Church polity he stands alone.

Calvin became the founder of an ecclesiastical organization which has almost rivalled the Church of Rome. Calvinism, if by the name we mean certain peculiarities of dogma promulgated by Calvin, is only accepted now by a minority of thinking people, and only with considerable reservations. But Calvinism as a system of Church polity retains its vitality as the recognized order of Presbyterians throughout the world, and as the form of constitution and worship of a large part of Great Britain and her colonies; of portions of France, Switzerland, Holland, as well as the American continent. Though like other reformers, Calvin believed implicitly in the Church Invisible, he was more interested in its outward form and government; and the latter part of his *Institutes* is occupied with a minute exposition of its constitution and disci-

pline. The Church, in his view, has high and sacred functions. It is the means by which believers are initiated into, and nourished in, the Christian life. To those to whom "God is a Father, the Church must also be a Mother." While contending for the independence of the Church, Calvin did not hold that the civil government had no duties in regard to it. When ecclesiastical discipline has failed to meet the enormity of a particular offence, the magistrate, as equally charged with maintaining the honour of God, must apply civil penalties. It is the duty of the officer of State to defend and protect the Church generally; though, in its own proper sphere, the Church is independent of his control. Calvin thus sought, while accepting, in the main, the mediæval theory of the relation of Church and State, to guard against the two-fold error of subjugating the Church to the State on the one hand; and, on the other, of acknowledging the Church's supremacy over the State.

The ecclesiastical polity of Calvin is intimately connected with his system of theology, and is, indeed, its logical sequence. Both have one source—the absoluteness and supremacy of God in all things. Divine sovereignty is the central truth of Calvin's system and the ruling conception of Reformed Theology. God's will is the ground of all existence. He is the fountain of all good, the source of all truth, justice and order. "Not a particle of light or wisdom, or justice or power, or rectitude or genuine truth, will anywhere be found which does not flow from Him, and of which He is not the cause." [1] The fundamental idea is that "the world, in all its parts and processes and stages of life, is the outcarrying in time of one divine plan, conceived in the eternity of the Godhead

[1] Calvin's *Inst.* bk. i. chap. ii. sec. 1.

and realized by creative power and wisdom and love." [1] The type of Calvin's thought is thus emphatically theocentric. The honour of God is the central idea. All creation subserves His glory and everything, down to the minutest detail of life and history, is determined by the divine will. The deity thus delineated is an absolute transcendental Being—a God outside the framework of the universe, who calls the world into existence, and acts upon it externally by the power of His will. The Genevan divine rejects with scorn the Zwinglian doctrine of God's Immanence, a theory, he says, " which mingles God and nature as that dog of a Lucretius has done."

The article of Divine sovereignty is not a new one. It is taught by St. Paul, elaborated by St. Augustine, and implicitly acknowledged by Luther. But in Lutheran theology it fell into a subordinate place, and finally became obscured by elements of a more subjective character. It has been the distinctive contribution of Calvin to theology. But in working out the conception with remorseless stringency to its logical conclusions he has unwittingly revealed its inadequacy, without the support of the complementary idea of Divine Immanence, to explain the relation of God and the world.

The doctrines of Foreordination and Election follow as inevitable corollaries. If God is absolutely supreme, then all destiny, good and evil, is ordained and determined. Calvin accepts the Augustinian view of man's inheritance, of Adam's first sin and his consequent total depravity and utter inability to extricate himself from the " deadly abyss " into which he has fallen.[2] From this hopeless state some

[1] Hastie, *Theology of the Reformed Church*, chap. iv.

[2] *Inst.* ii. 3. 5.

men are rescued by the mercy of God. The means by which their deliverance is effected is the sacrifice of Christ, "Who bore in the soul the torture of condemned and ruined men." [1] Christ's sacrifice was of value because the Father chose to put value upon it and ordain it the way of Salvation. Calvin explicitly affirms that Christ could not merit anything save by the good pleasure of God.[2] While Calvin accepts the mediaeval idea of atonement as expressed by Anselm, he assumes the position of Duns Scotus, that all moral values are wholly dependent upon the Divine will. That is good which God has pleased to call good, and that is evil which He has chosen to name evil. Morality is thus the arbitrary creation of the Divine will. If God had so determined He might have attached to the sufferings of a man or an angel the same value as He has attached to the sufferings of Christ. If some men are elected to salvation, others are of necessity passed over and thereby elected to perdition. Here Calvin goes beyond Augustine. The African Father was concerned only with election to life. But with a keener sense of consistency, the Genevan reformer saw that redemption and reprobation are both alike manifestations of Divine activity. As salvation is independent of merit, so perdition must be equally independent of demerit. There is no ground for complaint. All men are subject to condemnation. God is at liberty to bestow grace on whom He will; and if He is pleased to select some of the perishing so as to make them heirs of the Heavenly Kingdom, to cavil at His partiality is sheer presumption. If it be objected that it is mockery to condemn those who are predestined to corruption as responsible for their condition, Calvin simply replies, "It is the will

[1] iii. 14. 2. [2] ii. 17. 1.

of God." That is the highest rule of justice. Beyond that nothing more can be said. It is blasphemy to challenge the justice of God. It is somewhat remarkable that in discussing the difference of destiny among men, Calvin affirms that the whole scheme of redemption is grounded in the love of God. But obviously the reformer fails to give to Divine love its full significance. It is effectual only within an area which has been already limited by His will. It is difficult for the mind to reconcile the two ideas, that God loves the world and is not willing that any should perish, and yet that He determines that some should be saved and that others should be lost. Here surely the idea of love wholly vanishes. However we endeavour to tone down the teaching of Calvin and represent the Foreordination of God as taking place in the eternal mind of the Deity prior to time (the view which is taken by the so-called Supralapsarians); it is scarcely possible to rest satisfied with such a hard and limited conception of the character of God. To say that God hates those who are destitute of what He alone can give, and has of purpose withheld, is to introduce into the doctrine of the Deity an element of utter irrationality.[1]

Calvin himself was not insensible to the difficulties of the doctrinal position he assumed. His heart rebelled against the relentless logic of his mind. Like all the reformers he accepted implicitly the Word of God as the supreme authority and norm of belief; an authority which, he admits, must approve itself to the individual conscience by the testifying power of the Holy Spirit.[2] But valuable as is the testimony of the Holy Spirit, it is too subjective to be regarded as final, and it is noteworthy that when Calvin referred

[1] Cp. *Life of Calvin*, by Reyburn. [2] *Id.* i. vii. 4.

to the Bible he practically ceased to regard it as a medium of the Divine Spirit, and employed Scripture as a fixed compendium of Divine truth from which he might draw proof-texts in support of his doctrinal positions. He treated all parts of Scripture as on the same plane of significance, and all its books and chapters as of equal value. The Bible thus ceased to be a means of grace. It became a manual of dogmatic theology, a directory of worship and Church polity. "The full authority," he affirms, "which the Scriptures ought to possess with the faithful is not recognised, unless they are believed to have come from heaven, as directly as if God had been heard giving utterance to them." [1] He speaks at times of the sacred writers "as the sure and authentic amanuenses of the Spirit." [2] But for the most part he regards the revelation as given in Scripture as a direct communication of God, supernaturally imparted and independent of the action of reason or consciousness. It need hardly be said that Calvin's estimate of Scripture is now generally abandoned. The human element in the Bible is everywhere regarded as real, and the progressiveness of revelation is universally admitted. Calvin reads the Bible in the light of the ideas he borrowed from Scholastic theology. In his pronouncements on the doctrine of election he goes beyond the warrant of Scripture; and by a misinterpretation of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans he has framed a system of Salvation which is strangely foreign to the spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as a whole. The diffusion of the principles of Protestantism throughout the world is due, before all else, to the forceful personality and teaching of Calvin. But for him the story of the Reformation outside the land of its birth would

[1] *Inst.* i. vii. 1. [2] iv. 8. 9.

have been vastly different. He so impressed his interpretation of Christian truth upon men that his ideas became part of the mental fabric of a large portion of the inhabitants of central and western Europe, and, ultimately, of North America. In the confessions and catechisms of the Westminster Assembly of 1643 Calvinism became the symbolic expression which is still, in its essential features, the recognised creed of thousands of Christians in both hemispheres of the globe.[1]

Important as was Calvin's genius for organization and his statesman-like insight and breadth of vision, which enabled him, as few others have done, to grasp the religious situation of the age, the real secret of his influence lay in his pre-eminent qualities as a theologian. In clarity and precision of language, as well as in profundity and comprehensiveness of thought, the *Institutes*[2] ranks as one of the greatest presentations of Evangelical truth ever given to the world.

Though Calvin's system as a whole—on account of certain elements of harshness repugnant to the modern mind—does not command the unquestioning allegiance it once did, it exerted a profound fascination upon his own and the succeeding generation. The conception of the universal sovereignty of God, which is the central thought of Calvin's theology, gave a sense of security and confidence to men who, as witnesses and workers for God, were confronted by overwhelming opposition, hunted from place to place, and threatened by the prison and the stake. Men felt that they were soldiers of Christ, called to the ranks by divine appointment, and equipped with divine power to with-

[1] Cf. Walker, *John Calvin*, pp. 403 ff. See also Reyburn *idem*.

[2] See the classic edition of 1559. Quotations are taken from translation by Henry Beveridge in 2 vols. 1569.

stand their enemies. "He that is received into God's keeping cannot be touched with any hurt of water or fire or sword, but so far as it shall please God, the Governor, to give them place."[1] Nor was it less a source of strength and comfort to those who were profoundly conscious of their own individual sinfulness to know that their salvation was pledged by God Himself. The assurance given by the Gospel of Justification was confirmed by the Gospel of Election. A man might very well exaggerate his subjective faith; but to know that he had been chosen as an object of divine mercy from the foundation of the world, and to be convinced that the conditions of salvation were so absolutely fulfilled that no one could pluck him out of God's hand, proved to many a disquieted soul a powerful support. But while belief in God's omnipotence continues to be an invigorating tenet of the Reformed Faith, the same emphasis is not now laid upon the doctrine of election with its corollary of divine retribution as we find in the theology of Calvin. The predestinarian scheme of thought is felt by many to put an excessive strain on other parts of the Christian system.[2] We have already seen that it seems hardly consonant with the Christian idea of God. Not only does it reflect upon the moral character of the Deity generally, but it empties the qualities of justice and love, as applied to God, of meaning and value. It is certainly not easy to reconcile the conception of the Divine Fatherhood with the idea of the predetermined doom of a portion of mankind.

It has been also objected to the doctrine of election that it "degrades man to the level of a machine." If man's entire life is necessitated, then all his thoughts

[1] *Inst.* i. 17. 2.

[2] See *Rule of Faith*, by W. P. Paterson, p. 308.

and actions are but links in a mechanical order, and freedom of will has no place or function in human existence. This objection appears to have less weight when we take account of the difficulty in defining the conditions of human choice. Man's freedom of thought and action is not invalidated, nor is his personality reduced to a mere thing if the divine influence be regarded as among the forces which go to the making of character as a whole ; if it be conceived, in short, as working in and through the will of man, and creating that capacity for self-determination and decision which is acknowledged to be the highest form of human freedom.

It is further contended that Predestinarianism, as encouraging a temper of fatalism, is unfavourable to the moral life. On either alternative, whether a man believes himself to be of the elect or the non-elect, he is apt to relapse into a state of apathy. If he is one of God's chosen, assured of final perseverance, he yields himself to a life of careless optimism. If, on the other hand, he has reason to suspect his rejection, knowing that he is doomed, and that nothing he can do can alter his destiny, he naturally sinks into lethargy and despair. It may be pointed out, however, that the Calvinistic theory attempts to guard against this two-fold tendency by affirming that election involves election to repentance and sanctification as well as to saving faith in Christ ; and that where satisfaction in sin rather than desire of holiness plainly characterises a man's life, there is patent evidence of the absence of grace.

As a matter of fact, the practical effects of the Genevan doctrine have been quite the opposite. History has shown, indeed, that no creed has been so potent as Calvinism in stirring men to moral action and strenuous

spiritual endeavour.[1] The sense of being chosen of God to a high and holy calling has put "iron into the blood." Conscious of a divine purpose, like the ancient people of Israel, the Huguenots of France, the Puritans of England, the Covenanters of Scotland, and the Presbyterians of America, have contended earnestly for civil and religious liberties, evincing not seldom a spirit of heroism and sacrifice not surpassed in the annals of Christianity. "Can we wonder," says a modern writer, "that the faith propagated by men who feared no human face, should have spread so far and become so prolific a nurse of heroes."[2]

The ethics of Calvin are intimately correlated to his doctrine of God. The ideal of conduct is rigorous and austere. There is a strong ascetic strain pervading the moral code of Calvinism. Abstinence from the pleasures and vanities of this life, a sitting light to all earthly goods and comforts; in short, what has been called "Other-worldliness" is its distinctive note. The Christian life, Calvin tells us, "consists simply in keeping God's commandments," not because they are good, but because they are commanded. "God is the sole Master and Director of our lives, and He requires of us nothing more than obedience."[3] The service of God here loses the radiant gladness which is prominent both with Luther and Zwingli, and assumes a hard and stern, almost a gloomy aspect. Life lacks the spontaneity of joyous love, and becomes a grim, unceasing struggle to fulfil the behests of God. At the same time there is a note of grandeur and sublimity in the ethics of Calvinism. In its essence it is the

[1] See Froude's Essay, *Calvinism: Short Studies on Great Subjects*, vol. ii.

[2] Fairbairn, *Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 151.

[3] *Inst.* iv. 10. 7.

moralization of life by religion. The rule of God is to embrace the entire life. A man's conduct in all his earthly relations is to be regulated by the divine standard. In the home, the State, the Church, religion is to operate so that purity, integrity and justice may reign supreme.

It is characteristic of the supporters of the Reformed Faith that in their struggles against oppression they show a tendency to recur to the teaching of the Old Testament rather than the New. The same inflexible belief in a Deity of stern Justice, the same fierce indignation against wrong and indomitable zeal for right which animated the Hebrew prophets, prevailed in those communities which adopted the creed of Calvin. As the chosen instruments of God they felt themselves called to suffer and to do. The earth was to be conquered for the Lord, and in the battle for righteousness they were convinced that to them specially was committed this holy task. Thus there arose in Protestant lands the vision of a new world of which Christ alone was to be Sovereign. Yet it is characteristic of Calvinism that, with all the strong spiritual fervour it created, it is to the men and nations that have been most deeply imbued with its principles that the world chiefly owes the great scientific and commercial enterprises which have revolutionized modern civilization.

Lutheranism bears throughout the stamp of its Germanic origin. Zwinglianism is confined to the Swiss cantons. But in the Church of Calvin Protestantism for the first time assumes an international character, and the genius of its founder has left its mark upon the thought of the entire modern world.

In contrast to the subjectivity and individualism of Luther's teaching, Calvin elevates the Absoluteness of God ; and although his doctrine of Predestinarianism

does not finally solve the speculative problems of life, it is to the credit of the Genevan thinker that at least he has honestly grappled with the difficulties of human experience. With no facile or shallow solution does this man seek to silence doubt or satisfy faith. He has frankly faced the complex and conflicting facts of reality. Gainsay it as men may, there is undoubtedly a something in the world equivalent to what the theologian calls election. Human beings are placed in life unequally favoured both in inward disposition and outward circumstances. No amount of casuistry can explain away the differences among men. Science joins hand here with theology, and sees in heredity, environment, adaptation, and natural selection, the active and reactive forces by which life is evolved and history and destiny shaped. The higher and more satisfying interpretation of election, now generally accepted as consonant with the dictates of reason and the ends of Divine Grace—election to service, the one chosen as the agent or channel of blessing for the many—does not appear to have come within the consciousness of Calvin. Still, it is implicitly involved in the strongly practical character of his ethical teaching. If we believe, as Calvin assuredly does, that the world is governed by a conscious and intelligent Being, we are forced to believe also, however we may explain it, that these anomalies and diversities of life which puzzle us have not arisen by accident, but are parts of that one increasing purpose and all-embracing Good which have been ordered by the Creator of the world.

CHAPTER III

IN THE WAKE OF THE REFORMATION

The period succeeding the Reformation did not fulfil the hopes which the work of Luther and Calvin aroused. The Reformers lacked successors of their own calibre. It was an age of spiritual decadence and reaction. Enthusiasm waned. Faith yielded to formalism, and fervour was followed by cold indifferentism. Instead of the creative energy and bold initiative which marked the first outburst of the religious renascence, there were ominous symptoms of hesitancy, timidity and torpor in Protestant circles. There was no dearth of writers, either in the Lutheran or Reformed section, but the common aim of the period seemed to be the conservation of orthodoxy and the attainment of uniformity of belief by the suppression of originality of thought and even diversity of expression. The theology of the latter half of the sixteenth century reveals a relapse to the methods of Scholasticism. The traditions and formulas of Mediaeval thought were revived. A dreary conservatism asserted itself, and checked the awakening impulses to freshness and freedom of which the previous epoch had given token.

It is true that within the Reformed Church a reaction began to take shape whose aim was to challenge

the extreme Calvinistic doctrine of Election. The main interest of this period, therefore, centres in the revolt of Arminianism. The theory of Absolute Determinism no longer holds the field unchallenged. The rigour of the Calvinistic position is thenceforth confronted by the not less vigorous assertion of the human element in the destiny of mankind.

In this chapter, after briefly referring to some of the causes of the torpor and decadence of the Post-Reformation period, the origin and character of Arminianism, which has become a permanent factor in the evolution of religion, will claim our consideration.

I

1. Among the chief causes of the decline of religious life may be mentioned the unhappy social condition of central Europe. It was a time of serious political trouble. Even before Luther's death discontent had arisen in Germany, and frequent risings of the people had taken place. The Reformation, though not directly responsible for the "Peasants' War," was by no means without discredit in connection with it. It had created in the bosoms of people yearnings for freedom and hopes of relief which it failed to satisfy. Luther, though making some weak efforts to obtain concessions from the nobles, sided in the main with the aristocratic classes, and actually encouraged their repressive measures. Soon the whole of Southern Germany was in revolt. It assumed the form of a religious war, and was directed not only against the political lords but also against the ecclesiastical authorities. Flourishing and populous districts were desolated, and dire misery and want were spread

throughout the land. The rebellion was quelled with difficulty. The lot of the insurgents was actually harder than before, and many grievous burdens were laid upon the people at that time which continued for generations to oppress the poor and toiling classes. The progress of the Reformation was seriously hindered, and the religious life and higher thought of Germany were injuriously affected.

But even more grievous in its effects was the " Thirty Years' War," which began in 1618. Its immediate cause was the determined effort of Charles V. to suppress the religious freedom of the Protestants. Great and heroic figures emerged—Tilly, Wallenstein and Gustavus Adolphus. Bloody battles were fought. But not till 1648, when the greater part of central Europe was devastated, was the peace of Westphalia declared. The populations of whole districts were obliterated, and hundreds of the Protestant clergy were slain. Protestantism in many parts of the country was crushed, and religious liberty, so hardly won, was lost. Political jealousies were stirred, religious parties created and bitter animosities fomented, which a formal peace was powerless to heal. These feuds were deeply injurious to all the higher interests of the lands in which they were waged. Especially were they hurtful to the new seeds of religious life that had been so recently sown. The picture of the conditions of life and thought, which Schiller has drawn in his powerful drama, *Wallenstein's Lager,* reveals the heavy, long-drawn out oppression resting upon all classes of Germany at this time—an oppression which has left its mark on land and people almost to this day. No country can pass through the ordeal of war, however just be its cause, especially a long protracted war, without serious suffering and misery, without indeed

experiencing a certain abatement of its finer feelings and aspirations, an embitterment and hardening of soul. As a result of the Thirty Years' War the higher thought of Europe was paralyzed for more than a generation, and religious faith degenerated into dreary formalism.

2. As a farther cause some importance must be attached to the quickened opposition of the Romish Church. Though always hostile, papal authority was disposed at first to regard the Protestant agitation with contempt, believing that it would soon die a natural death.[1] But as the movement continued to spread the Church became alarmed, and resolved to lose no time in regaining those lands that had thrown off the Roman yoke. Even before the middle of the sixteenth century the demand for reform from within had taken shape; and in Spain, Italy and even Germany, such men as Ximenes, Caroffa and Pole had made resolute, if abortive, attempts to stem the tide of defection.[2] What is known as the "Counter-Reformation" comprised two important factors by means of which the Church hoped to gain its end. These were the Council of Trent and the Society of Jesus. Great things were expected of the Council. It was thought that its deliberations would practically heal the division, or at least effect a compromise between the contending parties. But though it sat for eighteen years it miserably failed, and only resulted in the complete and final separation of the Catholic and Protestant Churches, "having," as Acton says, "impressed on the Church the stamp of an intolerant age, and perpetuated by its decrees the spirit of an austere immorality."

[1] Cf. Ranke, *Die Röm. Päpste*, vol. ii. p. 20.

[2] Ranke, *ibid.*

Greater success attended the more aggressive efforts of the " Society of Jesus." The founding of this order, which was destined to affect the whole future of Christendom, is one of the romances of history. Ignatius Loyola, to whose genius the society owed its inception, was a man of ardent temperament and passionate yearnings, and his career was one of remarkable vicissitude and adventure. At first, a page at the Court of Ferdinand, then a soldier in the Spanish wars, a knight-errant whose deeds of chivalry won renown, a wounded captive languishing in a French hospital ; and after his conversion, brought about by reading the lives of the saints to relieve the tedium of his confinement, a mendicant pilgrim in eastern lands, an itinerant evangelist, a solitary hermit in the deserts of Africa ; and lastly, a student of divinity in Paris ;—such were the incidents of a checkered life by which this man was prepared for the high rôle he was to fulfil in the destinies of Catholicism. There was a strange mixture in his nature of the spiritual visionary and the practical man of affairs. Austerity and laxity, religious zeal and worldly astuteness combined to render his own personality the symbol of the society of which he was the soul. Of the sincerity of his motives, at least at the outset of his career, there is no reason to doubt. But as little can one resist the conclusion that he did not remain faithful to his ideals, and that the maxims and methods which afterwards stained the history of the order were adopted and practised at the instigation of its founder. One of the rules of the *Spiritual Exercises*, the authorship of which is generally assigned to Loyola, runs thus : " If anything which appears to our eyes to be white is defined by the Catholic Church to be black, we must forthwith declare that it is

black." The power wielded by the order was enormous. By the seventeenth century its influence had spread throughout the whole religious world. Its missionaries invaded all the countries which the maritime discoveries of a previous age had made accessible. Its emissaries penetrated to the heart of Peruvia and the centre of China. They were to be found as far north as Iceland and in the southern extremities of the African continent.[1] Eventually its political machinations, its system of espionage, its arts of cunning and duplicity, by which the society carried on its work, and for which the term "Jesuitism" has become the synonym, were the most powerful instruments employed by the Catholic Church in its efforts to crush the Protestant faith. The story of the "Society," says Macaulay, "is the history of the great Catholic reaction, and in it was concentrated the quintessence of the Catholic spirit."

It was not on moral influence alone that the Church of Rome relied. When persuasion failed, force was resorted to; and where appeal to self-interest was impotent to win converts, the spiritual directors did not scruple to call in the aid of the civil sword. Mr. Symonds, in his brilliant work on the Renaissance, protests that historians have exaggerated the part which the Jesuits played in the Counter-Reformation. Probably most historians will agree that without the gold and the sword of Spain, without the tortures of the Inquisition and the coercive measures of the "Congregation of the Index," the Society of Jesus alone, however versatile in its choice of means, could not have compassed the end it set out to achieve. But, on the other hand, even less, without the intense and stubborn devotion and the unscrupulous policy of the

[1] Ranke, *Die Röm. Päpste*, vol. ii. p. 6, pp. 490 ff.

Jesuits, could the Inquisition and the Index have been adequate to cope with the task. These were but the material weapons of the Jesuitical warfare. Behind them was the relentless and unpitying mind which instigated and directed their use. Of the effectiveness of the Inquisition there can be no question. Suspects were hunted down, while those who evinced even the mildest sympathy with Protestantism, or gave the merest suggestion of heretical opinions, whatever their rank or reputation, were subjected to cruel persecution.[1] The *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* searched out and destroyed all heretical writings. Many famous books and treasured volumes were proscribed and hopelessly lost. Originality was repressed, and all forms of intellectual activity were curbed.

3. Not less disastrous than opposition from without to the progress of thought were the divisions which arose within Protestantism itself. In the wake of the Reformation there sprang up a number of sects and parties which not only revolted from the parent stock, but broke into bitter strife among themselves. While most of these traced their lineage to the New Faith; some were due to a desire to carry to their ultimate issues the principles they had imbibed; others had their origin in an attempt to mitigate the extreme rigour of Reformed doctrine.

The first serious difference was that which arose between Lutherans and Calvinists. Even before the death of the Reformed leader a divergence, not so much of principle as of emphasis, showed itself, which became more pronounced as time went on. The two sections

[1] See the rules laid down by Caraffa, who became Pope, for the regulation of inquisitors. Cited by Ranke, *Die Röm Päpste*, vol. i. p. 210.

represented different tendencies of thought. The Wittenberg reformer dwelt more prominently upon the subjective feeling of the creature; the Genevan theologian affirmed rather the controlling will of the Creator. The one approached the problem of religion from the human side, the other from the divine. This difference of religious attitude, for at first it was nothing more, gradually manifested itself in distinctive modes of thought, life, polity and worship, and took shape in various forms of reaction which appeared in connection with each. Lutheranism, though less extensive in area, was more subject to internal division than Calvinism. The Idea of Saving Faith, which was the cardinal tenet of the German type, lent itself more easily to all sorts of individualistic interpretation. But, as we shall presently see, there were also dissentients within the ranks of Calvinistic orthodoxy. Of the various sectaries of this period,—Philippist, Syngeristic, Antinomian, Majoristic, Osiandrian and many others—it is needless to speak. They are now little more than names to us, and have significance only as illustrating the extreme formalism and bitter discord of the age.

As a result of the causes just enumerated there prevailed a state of mental torpor and stagnation which affected generally all departments of life and activity throughout Europe. Theological interest especially declined. Elaborate treatises continued, indeed, to be compiled, and dogmatic systems to be expounded in the universities; but the teaching was of the arid mediæval type, without reference to the wider thought of the world and without influence upon the religious life of the people. The truths of Christianity were treated, not in relation to the heart and conscience, but solely to the logical understanding.

The aim of the teacher was to defend the Gospel as an orthodox creed rather than to present it as a regenerative power. Thus religion hardened into a crust affording little or no nutriment for the common life of man.

II

The troubles which vexed the Lutheran type of Protestantism were not altogether absent from the Reformed section, but in the case of the latter, controversy assumed the form of active criticism, and even of reaction, which came to a head in the Arminian revolt. To this factor in the development of Protestant thought we now turn our attention.

We have seen that the doctrine of Justification by Faith, which Luther designated the article of a standing or falling church, became the cardinal tenet of Lutheranism. The Reformed Church, while not denying the importance of this truth, took a step farther back in the elucidation of the process of salvation. The doctrine of Justification, though an antidote to righteousness by works and a true account of the operation of redemption in the individual heart, was still a subjective or anthropological principle based upon a determinate action of the human mind; it was a mere state of consciousness subject to all the limitation and contingency of the finite individual. Hence the reformed theologians sought to go beyond it to the recognition of the immediate energy of the divine Personality, to pass behind the human process into the ultimate sphere of the divine purpose. The doctrine of Sovereign Grace, therefore, became the fundamental principle of the Reformed Church around which the controversies of the seventeenth century revolved. Just as within the Lutheran community

the voice of protest was raised against the exaggerated individualism of its theology, so within the Calvinistic body there appeared a growing spirit of dissatisfaction in regard to the dogma of Divine absolutism. Even in the lifetime of Calvin a certain measure of restiveness was manifest among his adherents which the leader sought to allay by the publication of the tractate, *De Libero Arbitrio*. But after his death the more advanced position held by the Supralapsarians was subjected from various sides to serious assault.

The first attack emanated from the ranks of Socinianism. The elder Socinus and his followers founded their main objection to the Foreordination of God upon the contingent freedom of the human will and the consequent uncertainty of all events. Their criticism was more particularly directed against the two most vital points of Calvinism—the doctrine of the Godhead and the theory of the Atonement. With reference to the first, the Socinians combated the unreality of Divine distinctions and the consequent assigning of separate functions to the distinctive persons of the Godhead. The will of the Deity is one, they held, and His relation to man must also be one. What God is in Himself is inscrutable. But the alleged difference of dispositions within God's nature, as implied by a trinity of persons, is not only fatal to the metaphysical unity but inconsistent with the ethical character, of the Deity. There can be no conflict between the justice of the Father and the benevolence of the Son. In regard to the second point—the atoning Sacrifice of Christ, they repudiated entirely the meaning which the Calvinists put upon the death of Jesus. The doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ was a pure assumption, since there could be no such thing as vicarious sacrifice. Man, they held,

in his natural state is free to choose the right. The death of Christ, therefore, was simply a manifestation of Divine compassion; and its sole significance for us is the assurance it gives of God's purpose and will to pardon sin.

It was only natural that the Socinian limitation of the power and knowledge of God should be regarded by the Calvinists as a virtual denial of His infinitude and therefore as a subversion of their whole position—their belief in divine sovereignty. Socinianism presents a strange mixture of shallow rationalism and extreme supernaturalism. The influence of the Italian Renaissance is manifest in its teaching. All religious truth is examined in the cold light of the understanding. Its criticism had some little value as a counteractive to the exaggerated Scholasticism of the seventeenth century theology, but it has exerted only slight influence upon the more positive currents of religious thought. "It represented the play of the prosaic understanding in the region of the speculative imagination." Its importance lies in subjecting traditional tenets to rational scrutiny, and, by combating partial and one-sided statements, in preparing the way for a more adequate expression of truth. "With the old dogmas," says Harnack, "Socinianism has at bottom set aside Christianity as a religion. Guilt and penitence, faith and grace, are conceptions which are only saved by inconsistencies—out of regard for the New Testament—from being wholly eliminated." [1]

The most notable opposition to Calvinism was the revolt which took place within the folds of the Reformed Church. The Arminian Controversy appeared first in Holland. It borrows its name from James Arminius, a man of scholarly attainment who had been a pupil

[1] *Dogmengeschichte*, iii. 691.

of Beza in Geneva and who became in 1603 professor of theology at Leyden. Here he came into conflict with one of his colleagues, Gomarus, a rigid Calvinist. The more Arminius examined the position of extreme orthodoxy the more did he feel disposed to dissent from it; and before 1609, the year of his death, he had published his main objections. His arguments were developed by other Dutch divines, among whom Episcopius, his successor at Leyden, and Wytenvogaert were the most able. The Arminian creed was eventually set forth in a document of remonstrance addressed to the States of Holland and West Friesland which gave to the party the name of "Remonstrants." The document consisted of Five Articles, which were ultimately condemned at the first great council of the Reformed Church—the Synod of Dort—in 1619. The points of dispute centred in the fundamental doctrine of Calvinism—the principle of absolute predestination. The attempt was made by the Remonstrants to overcome the extreme harshness of the absolute decree by making election to grace dependent within the Divine Mind on the foreseen faith and good works of believers. This doctrine of "conditional election," as it was called, affirmed that election did not proceed entirely from the divine will but was in part determined by human faith and conduct. In agreement with this fundamental principle they asserted the universality of the Atonement, in the sense that Christ died for all men, although, as a matter of fact, all men were not saved. They held also the doctrine of universal grace, but maintained, at the same time, that faith was an act of man's free choice. Further, in virtue of his freedom, they held that man could finally resist the power of divine grace. Lastly, they believed that it was possible to be the subject of

grace, and yet to fall away, and even ultimately to perish. Against all these objections the synod reasserted the fundamental principle of absolute predestination as alone consistent with God's sovereign power and eternal purpose.

The most powerful advocate, as indeed the most interesting figure, on the remonstrant side, was Hugo Grotius, the eminent Dutch lawyer and statesman. Born at Delft in 1583, he was endowed with exceptional precocity and versatility. He became a student at Leyden at the age of eleven and entered on public life at fifteen. Though trained for the law his tastes were theological, and when the Arminian controversy was at its height he took the side of the remonstrants. There was an element of adventure in his career. The theological strife had a political bearing, and in 1618 Grotius, along with others, was arrested on account of his political opinions and condemned to imprisonment for life in the castle of Lövenstein. He escaped by the contrivance of his wife, who succeeded in getting him carried out of the castle hidden in a linen chest while she remained in his stead.

Grotius was not only a brilliant jurist but also a profound theologian, probably the first exegete of his day and one of the most learned men of all time. In 1625 he published his great work, *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, which to this day is the chief source on all questions of public right. Of his many theological writings that which concerns us most here is his treatise on the Satisfaction of Christ, written in 1617.[1] The object of this work is to show that Christ died,

[1] *Defensio fidei Catholicæ de Satisfactione Christi.* The one outstanding attempt to rehabilitate doctrine of Satisfaction as against Socinian criticism. Cp. Denney, *Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p. 110.

not because God could not forgive sin unless divine justice was satisfied, but to manifest the enormity of sin. Grotius combats Anselm's "commercial theory," and represents the relation to be one rather of a juridical or governmental character. A ruler has a right to remit a penalty if the end be otherwise attained. The object of punishment is not to avenge wrong, but to preserve order and prevent transgression. The atonement was the divine recognition of this principle. Because of Christ's recognition of this truth God remits the penalty and saves the sinner from the law. Christ's death has thus the value of a penal example. No absolute satisfaction is made and no *quid pro quo* is given. There is no actual punishment, only a symbol of it. The salvation of all is thus made possible, though the salvation of no one is necessary. The stricter Calvinists considered that the "Governmental Theory" was a betrayal rather than a defence of the truth. The absoluteness of divine justice, they held, demands that the full debt of the law must be paid, if not by the sinner, then by Christ as his substitute. The theory of Grotius is artificial in form and not very convincing; yet it secured many supporters at a later date in New England in the school of Edwards.

A somewhat similar attempt to mitigate the harshness of High Calvinism was made by the theologians of the Saumur school. The founder of this school was the Scotsman, John Cameron, who was principal of Glasgow University from 1622 to 1626, but afterwards sought greater freedom in France, and became professor of theology at Saumur. Cameron and his colleagues, among whom the best known are Amyraldus, Lapellus, and Placaeus, sought to mediate between the Calvinistic doctrine of "Absolute election" and the

Arminian theory of "conditional election" by affirming, along with the real decree of particular election, a universal antecedent will of Grace. It was admitted, however, that this gracious desire on the part of God could not be realized because of the sin of fallen men. This potential or ideal universalism was termed "Hypothetical Universalism" because it never went beyond the divine idea, being arrested by man's actual sin. A distinction was drawn between natural and moral ability similar to that which Edwards afterwards made. It was held that while man had a natural ability he lacked moral power or will to believe until moved by regenerating grace, which, however, was not bestowed on all. This subtle psychological theory aroused considerable discussion at the time; but it was ultimately rejected on the ground that it was merely a formal hypothesis which had no real basis in the purpose of God.

It would be futile to follow at greater length the various efforts made in the wake of the Reformation to soften the uncompromising conclusions to which Calvinistic Dogma committed human thought. These theories illustrate the extreme formalism of the age, and their sole value is to show that in the hearts of a few there was a dim consciousness of the unreality of the whole conception of the purpose of God and a strong if indistinct yearning to break through the verbal incrustation in which thought was encased and attain to a more profound and living appreciation of what is meant by the Divine Fatherhood.

Sufficient has been said to show the artificial character of the discussions. The whole controversy was barren and abstract, with no bearing on reality or relation to human interest. It was a relapse to the mediæval

style of thought, and in all sections of Protestantism the mechanical methods of scholastic argument prevailed. It will be impossible here to enter upon a discussion of the relative truth of the rival theologies of the period. That there was an important element of truth in both the Calvinistic and Arminian position must not, however, be forgotten; and the controversy has more than merely speculative interest. It touches upon Deistic and Christological questions which came into greater importance in the succeeding centuries. The essential difference between the two systems was as to the amount or measure of co-ordination of the divine and human in the work of salvation. Was the primary and predominant element with God or with man? The Calvinists held that the principle of Arminius was a virtual denial of divine grace, and a transference of the work of salvation in its origin and execution from God to man. The Arminians, on the other hand, held that the Calvinism of Beza and Gomarus converted the divine will into mere fate, and so made God the author of sin, thereby annulling the voluntary and ethical side of religion. Both parties carried their convictions to extremes. Arminianism arose as a protest against the absolutism of the Calvinistic doctrine; but it must be acknowledged that it does not succeed any better than the theory of the Genevan reformer in explaining the mystery or solving the antithesis of necessity and liberty. Calvinism has at least the advantage of presenting a more coherent system. Starting from the divine side and arguing towards divine ends, it must undoubtedly be pronounced to be logically and philosophically the more consistent theory of the two. But Arminianism has the merit of directing attention to some neglected elements in the Calvinistic statement of

faith, and more particularly of emphasizing the humanistic and ethical aspects of religion.

Some relief from the stringency of the Calvinistic system was effected by the formation of the theory of Covenants, or what has been called the "Federal Theology" of the Reformed Church. The introduction of this idea has been usually attributed to the Dutch theologian Cocceius; but though it was developed by him and his follower, Witius, into its most systematic form, the theory is much older, and may even be traced to the first theologians of the Reformed Church.[1] The idea of a covenant-relation between God and man is indicated by Calvin himself in the *Institutes*.[2] It was outlined by Bullinger, Zwingli's successor at Zurich, in his correspondence with Cranmer and other reformers of the Church of England. It found its way into Scotland at the time of the Scottish Reformation and gave that peculiar form and complexion to the religious thought of the Scottish Church which has been ever since its characteristic note. Among the Puritans of England it obtained almost universal acceptance; and it received prominent and permanent expression in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

The idea of a covenant is essentially a Biblical one. It embodies the principle of a personal and spiritual communion between God and man. It sets forth divine revelation as an historical evolution, which passes through a series of advancing dispensations till it culminates in the dispensation of grace as manifested in Christ. These successive "economies" or historical stages in the religious development have been commonly divided into two, agreeing generally with

[1] See W. Hastie, *The Theology of the Reformed Church.*

[2] *Inst. Calvin,* vol. i. chap. x. pp. 369 ff.

the Old and the New Testament, and designated as the "Economy of the Law" and the "Dispensation of the Gospel." But, with deeper philosophic insight, Cocceius and later adherents of the Federal theology have divided the historical dispensations into three, which correspond with the orderly movement of the religious history of mankind from its first rudimentary beginnings to its culmination in the Christian realization of its ideal, and which are designated "the economy of grace before the Law," the "economy under the Law," and "the economy of the Gospel." It has been claimed by a modern writer [1] that these three stages—the religion of nature, the religion of legality in the moral order, and the religion of immediate spiritual redemption—correspond in a very close way with the three great divisions in the Hegelian conception of the development of religion. Whether or not the federal Theology, as developed and expounded by Cocceius and his school, may be regarded as an anticipation of the Hegelian philosophy of religion, it is at least not too much to say that the Dutch divine possessed what was uncommon in his day, something of the historical instinct; and it may fairly be urged that the principle of the historical evolution of religion which has come so prominently to the front since Hegel's time, and chiefly as a consequence of Hegel's profound exposition of the idea, is a conception which is not only compatible with the true interpretation of the absolutism of The Divine Being, but is implicitly contained as an essential element in the Reformed Theology.

[1] W. Hastie, *Theology of the Reformed Church.*

III

Before concluding this chapter it may not be out of place to indicate briefly the real significance for Modern thought of the Arminian protest. The revolt from the extreme absolutism of Calvinism was bound to come sooner or later. It was a revival of the old question of the relation of necessity and free-will; or, as it shaped itself in Scholastic theology, the problem of reconciling Divine Power and human personality. Grand and imposing as is the Calvinistic conception of God, it raises issues which the modern mind finds it difficult to harmonise with the world of reality as it is presented in experience. Do the decrees of God determine from eternity all that is to happen in the world and everything that each man purposes and achieves? Does the divine nature reproduce itself by an inevitable process in each successive temporal event? Is all, in short, "once and for all given," as Bergson would say; and is the working out of history and human action on the stage of the world nothing else than the visible representation of a plan or programme already thought out and arranged to the minutest item in the mind of God? Are the hazards and struggles of life, to us so real and momentous, nothing but a delusion, the issues of which have been determined ere ever they were entered on? The questions thus put involve in difficulty every form of the Absolute—The Transcendentalism of Hegel not less than the Sovereign decree of Calvin. Though sometimes concealed with considerable acumen and a multitude of words the answer is determined in every case by the concept of causality. Ultimately all activity is referred to the Deity. No room is left for the freedom and initiative of the finite. And since

human agency is explainable as merely a necessary consequence of a divine decree nothing more remains to be said.[1]

But surely it is relevant to remark that this form of Absolute Monism effects its solution simply by crushing out one of the factors. The real problem arises when we refuse to recognise the all-sufficiency of the causal nexus to explain the world of human incidence, and seek to find a justification for what presents itself as novelty, initiative, originality, freedom, spiritual reaction. When human spirits are regarded not as mere copies or reproductions of divine activity but as themselves purposeful and active beings, and God is conceived as communicating freedom to men that they may attain the values which only free beings can themselves realize, then there arises the possibility of co-operation, and even of conflict, between God and man. But while this view of the matter seems to do justice to man's freedom, it hardly safeguards the absolute power and sovereignty of God. For the question still remains—How is the co-agency of God and man to be conceived without an arbitrary dualism which treats God as if He were simply one member in a finite scheme of the co-partnery? The traditional way of dealing with this difficulty was to separate the divine and human spheres of action. A distinction was made between the natural and the supernatural, between the realms of nature and grace. The region of common life was assigned to man. But beyond that was a sphere in which God alone was sovereign and the soul of man was passive, simply clay in the hands of the potter who of his own will makes one vessel to honour and another to dishonour.

[1] See suggestive discussions of this problem in Sorley's Gifford Lectures, *Moral Values and The Idea of God.*

But the explanation thus afforded by a mechanical dualism is even less satisfactory than that offered by an absolute monism. We cannot rest content with dividing man's life into two separate departments. The soul is a unity. Man is never passive or irresponsible. It is inconceivable that in the highest sphere, viz. the kingdom of grace,—the region in which all that is most distinctive in man is at its highest and best and the powers of the soul are most vital and intense,—God should communicate His influence irrespective of man's will. That were surely to annul human freedom, to rob manhood of its crown and to destroy the soul at its very core. The spirit of God does not quench the natural faculties of man, but works upon and through them, raising them to a higher value. If there was not already implicit in man that which predisposes him for the higher life God offers, a consciousness to which the divine may appeal, then the Grace of God, and all that Christianity stands for, would be simply a mechanical or magical influence without ethical significance, and having no relation to the past history or future hopes of the individual. In meeting and welcoming God's appeal the spirit of man is not passive but responsive. The divine influence comes as a gift not as a compulsion. The entrance to the soul is craved not forced. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock."

> "This sanctuary of my soul
> Unwitting I keep white and whole,
> Unlatched and lit, if Thou should'st care
> To enter and to tarry there." [1]

The doctrine of irresistible grace, as has been truly said, can only be accepted to-day with considerable

[1] Quoted by Professor Pringle-Pattison in his Gifford Lectures, *The Conception of God.*

qualifications.[1] The spirit of God must rather be conceived as working through the spirit of man, but in such a way as not to destroy but to quicken and intensify human freedom. We can no longer interpret divine influence under the image of mechanical force. The figure of the Potter and the clay comes to us with the impress of high authority and will never lose its suggestiveness; but, as a symbol of the relation of God and man, it is partial and defective, leaving out aspects of the truth which we cannot afford to neglect. Even Browning who, in his "Rabbi Ben Ezra," has used the metaphor of the clay and the potter's wheel with fine effect, feels that the attitude of passivity and quiescent trust is only a phase of man's life and must not be taken for the whole. Browning's characteristic doctrine on this matter is not acquiescence and resignation. "Leave God the way" has, in his view, its counterpart and condition—"Have you the will!" "The bliss of endeavour, the infinite worth of the consciousness of failure, with its evidence of coming triumph, 'The spark which disturbs our clod,' these are the essences of his optimistic interpretation of human life, and also of his robust ethical doctrine." [2]

Arminianism, though originally expressed in terms of Mediæval Scholasticism and in spite of its dualism and narrow individualism, in its purport has helped to emancipate the mind from the old conception of causality and brought into prominence the Christian conception of the pervasive immanence and transforming power of Love. Love rises above natural law and works through freedom. In the realm of life spirit acts upon spirit. There is a fundamental affinity

[1] Sorley, *op. cit.*

[2] Jones, *Browning as a Philosophical and Religious Teacher*, p. 134.

between the divine and the human. The call of God is an appeal to the essential nature and destiny of man—an appeal to each human being made in God's image to realise his true self and find his highest freedom in fulfilling the divine will.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROTEST OF PURITANISM

In its origin and character the Reformation in England had little in common with the contemporary movement on the continent. In Germany the agitation was principally religious. In England it had its roots in political intrigue, and only became religious in spite of statecraft. The destruction of the papal supremacy was the work of Henry VIII. The immediate cause was the refusal of the Pope to sanction the king's divorce with Catharine of Aragon. Whether Henry was really actuated by conscientious scruples in regard to his marriage, or avowed them merely to screen his own selfish ends, in any case his quarrel with the Pope forms an important link in the chain of events which brought about the emancipation of the English Church.

While the Reformation in England was in the first instance the outcome of political causes, without a considerable popular sentiment behind the action of the king, political power alone could not have effected the revolution which took place. Lollardism, Mysticism and Humanism had already made their appearance, and Protestant heresy, as shown in *Foxe's Acts and Monuments*, was preparing the ground for the new teaching. Moreover the influence of continental

thought was stronger than is sometimes acknowledged. The waves of the Reformation laved the shores of Britain. There was considerable inter-communication; scholars travelled to and fro. Colet and More studied in Italy and France. John Knox resided for a time both in Geneva and Frankfort. The writings of Luther and Calvin were circulated in Britain. Intercourse between England and Switzerland was prevalent. Bullinger and Beza, the successors of Zwingli and Calvin, were the oracles of English divines in the reign of Elizabeth, and the *Zurich Letters* are among the most important documents to-day for the history of the Anglican revival.[1] The Protestant cause, inaugurated by Henry and furthered by Edward VI., received a set-back in the reign of Mary, at whose cruel instigation the fires of Smithfield were lighted and kept burning to appease the God of Romanism. With the accession of Queen Elizabeth a better state of affairs set in; and the settlement made in the early part of her reign may be regarded as the beginning of a new era in England; while the formulation of the "Thirty-nine Articles" at the convocation of 1563 may be taken as marking the time when "the alteration of religion" was completed. The supremacy of the Church of England was established and, though during the next hundred years of storm and strain its qualities of endurance were to be tested, its position is to-day, in doctrine, worship and polity, what it became under Elizabeth in the middle of the sixteenth century.

But though Protestantism was thus established in England the shape it took did not satisfy all parties.

[1] By and by the intercourse grew rarer, as the English Church grew too Anglican to have much in common with Zurich or Geneva. Cf. Ischer, *Die Gesandtschaft der Protest. Schweiz bei Cromwell.*

While some were impatient of a reformation that seemed to them a timid and inconsistent compromise with Romanism, others who clung to the old Patristic traditions believed that too much had been conceded to the revolutionary party, and that the Church of England was in danger of losing its continuity with the past. As a matter of fact, the church speedily disclosed the compromise from which it sprang. This may be seen in the first instance in relation to its *organisation*. Episcopacy was held by the Romish Church to be of divine institution. This the leaders of the Anglican party retained; though Cranmer, who did more than any other to lay the foundations of the Church, did not contend that episcopacy was an institution essential to the welfare of Christian society. So with regard to *worship*. While among Presbyterians the form of prayer was left to the control of the minister, among the Romanists the ritual was prescribed, with the result that the confessions and supplications being in Latin were not intelligible to the general body of the worshippers. Here again the Anglicans adopted a middle course. They copied the Roman forms, but translated them into the common tongue and invited the people to take part. So too in the other parts of the Anglican system—in the dispensing of the sacraments, in the position of the altar, in the wearing of priestly vestments, in the rites of clerical ordination, in the confirmation of the young and absolution granted to the dying—the English Church, while abating somewhat the high and rigid forms of the Catholic order, retained enough of the old ceremonial to give to her constitution, in the eyes of Presbyterians at least, a distinctively Roman tone and colour. But in nothing did the Church of England reveal its contrast to the other branches of Protestantism

so much as in the relation it stood to the *monarchy*. Some supreme authority had to be recognised. As the Pope was the head of the Roman Church, so the king became the head of the Anglican Church. The doctrine was not indeed clearly defined; and at different stages of its history and by different exponents of its polity, the church's relation to the crown was variously interpreted. But the tendency was to assign more and more power to the civil ruler; and it is no exaggeration to say that to this cause more than any other the future troubles of the country, both ecclesiastical and civil, may be ascribed. The difference between the two conceptions of the church was irreconcilable, and the compromise attempted by the English reformers was doomed to failure. The more ardent Protestants especially, who retained in their veins something of the spirit of Wyclif, and those who in a previous generation had suffered for the purity of their faith, were determined to be satisfied with nothing less than the complete repudiation of all the traditions which they associated with the Romish order.

During the whole period three distinct tendencies or schools of thought disclose themselves; two rival forces, the Puritan and Anglo-Catholic parties; and a third party, the so-called "Latitudinarian" or liberal school, which sought to mediate between the others.

I

The name of "Puritan," like that of "Huguenot," "Quaker," "Methodist," and indeed "Christian" itself, was at first given as a nickname, devised as a term of contempt. But in course of time, like many another epithet of derision, it became a title in which

not a few gloried. The ecclesiastical writers of the seventeenth century, Heylyn and Fuller, refer its origin to the early years of Queen Elizabeth. Heylyn gives the year 1565 as the actual date at which "these Zwinglian or Calvinistic factions began to be first known by the name of Puritans . . . which name has been ever since appropriate to them because of their pretending to greater purity in the service of God than was held forth unto them in the common prayer-book." [1] Fuller, ascribing the first use of the name to the year 1564, says that "Puritan was taken for the opposers of the hierarchy and Church service as resenting of superstition. But profane mouths quickly improved this nickname therewith on every occasion to abuse pious people." [2] But the spirit of Puritanism, if not the name, had appeared already in the reign of Edward VI. Bishop Hooker refused to be consecrated in papal vestments and to take the papal oath. And persecution under Mary for similar refusals drove many clergymen out of the country.

It is no part of our purpose to describe in detail the history of the movement. In the main three phases may be distinguished. There is first the period of protest and persecution under Elizabeth; next, the era of its growing power and ascendancy during the Commonwealth; and lastly, its decline as a political party after the Restoration.

At the basis of the movement, the secret of its moral force and character, two factors at once impress us; the first relates to its *origin* in the preaching of Wyclif; and the second, to its *principle* centring in a profound belief in the Word of God.

[1] *History of the Reformation*, ii. p. 421.

[2] Fuller, *Church History*, ii. p. 474.

There can be no doubt that the Reformation, in so far as it was a religious and not merely a political manifestation, owed its first impulse to Lollardism. And from the early spiritual revival, inaugurated by Wyclif and his band of preachers, there came the awakening of the popular consciousness to the meaning of the Gospel and the dynamic of personal conviction, which was throughout its whole course a distinguishing feature of Puritanism. Closely connected with this factor was the other—its strong and persistent faith in the divine authority and power of the Scriptures. To the Puritans chiefly, if not exclusively, England owes its peculiar reverence for the Bible. "England," says Mr. Green in his eloquent chapter on Puritan England, "became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible." [1] Elizabeth might silence the pulpits of the land, but she could not silence the preachers of righteousness and mercy, who spake from the pages of the Book that had found its way into the homes and hearts of the people. The Bible became for the Puritans the source and standard of all truth and right. Nothing, they maintained, should be permitted in doctrine, worship or polity which was not approved by Scripture. Probably not a score among the people of England could judge between the merits of Presbyterianism and prelacy, but all could appreciate personal freedom, and in the Bible they recognised their charter of liberty.

Up till the year 1570 the question at issue was one of ritual simply, and had to do principally with ceremonies and vestments; but afterwards the whole subject of the nature of the Church and its relation to the Crown was involved. To the Puritans, vestments were but symbols, trifling in themselves, but

[1] *Short History of the English People*, chap. viii.

significant for what they implied. In the first Admonition to Parliament in 1572—the earliest Puritan manifesto—it is affirmed that "neither is this controversy between them and us for a cap, a tippet, or a surplice, but for great matters concerning a true ministry and a regiment of the Church according to the Word." Two great polemical duels during the reign of Elizabeth reveal the nature and evolution of Puritanism. The first of these conflicts took place between Thomas Cartwright, the staunch Calvinist and learned professor of Divinity at Cambridge, and Whitgift, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. Cartwright attacked Prelacy and affirmed that Presbyterianism was the only Scriptural polity. The second had reference to ecclesiastical discipline, and was waged between Walter Travers and Richard Hooker. In a treatise published in 1574, which became the recognised text-book of Puritan principles, Travers boldly assailed the whole spirit and procedure of Episcopacy, accusing the Anglican Church of serious departure from the Word of God. The author of *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* replied to his opponent with the moderation and calmness which characterised the entire spirit of the great churchman. But the same cannot be said of Whitgift. He met Cartwright's attack with extraordinary bitterness and unwisdom, and used his influence to secure the expulsion of the professor from the university.

It was men of the type of Whitgift, hard, arrogant and unscrupulous, the tools and sycophants of their royal masters, who did more to foment the passions of the time and to widen the gulf of religious difference than the whole body of the Puritans, turning, as Macaulay says, by their high-handed officialism, "a harmless sect into a formidable faction." The petty

interferences and studied insults to which ecclesiastics like Parker, Bancroft and Laud subjected the Nonconformists only tended to intensify their sense of wrong and foster their spirit of independence. And it was only natural that the oppressed party on attaining to power was not slow to retaliate. Goaded by persecution, the more intolerant faction did not rest till they succeeded in overthrowing not Episcopacy only, but the monarchy as well.

From the seventeenth century onwards, and especially during the Commonwealth, questions of ceremonial and Church government fell into the background, and the demand for a purer morality and stricter life became the distinguishing feature of the movement. Puritanism during the reign of James I. cannot be rightly understood until it is viewed against the dark background of much prevailing wickedness. The more serious element in the nation was revolted by the licentious spirit that was spreading through English society. Whatever may be said of its earlier ecclesiastical contentions, the significance of later Puritanism lay in its protest against social corruption. A generation was arising of Nonconformists who had ceased to trouble themselves about questions of caps and surplices, and many of the other external matters that seemed all-important to their fathers. What they lost in logic they gained in breadth. "They desired that under the teaching of the Bible, interpreted as it was by them through the medium of the Calvinistic theology, every Englishman should devote himself to the fulfilment of those duties in which they saw the worthy preparation for the life to come. . . . It was by its demand for a purer morality that Puritanism retained its hold upon the laity." [1]

[1] S. R. Gardiner, *History of England*, iii. 229ff.

In their excessive zeal for righteousness some of the stricter sect proceeded to extremes of fanaticism. Some mistook vindictiveness for ardour, and gloom for piety; while others found it profitable to assume the pose and guise of godliness instead of its reality. In minds of an undisciplined order there was a tendency to a hard, unsocial sternness of life. The strict Puritan recognised a brotherhood among the elect alone. Without the pale of saints lay a world which was hateful to him, because it was at enmity with his God. The severity of Puritan manners as manifested in dress, deportment and language, as well as in hypocrisy and dissimulation, has been ridiculed by Shakespeare and other of the Elizabethan dramatists. The pictures drawn by the historians, such as Macaulay, Buckle, Taine, though containing a measure of truth, contain also a large element of caricature. "The extreme Puritan," says Macaulay,[1] "was at once known from other men by his gait, his garb, his lank hair, the sour solemnity of his face, the upturned white of his eyes, the nasal twang with which he spoke, and above all, by his peculiar dialect." "His speech stuffed with scriptural quotations," says Taine, "his names and the names of his children drawn from the Bible, bore witness that his thoughts were confined to the terrible world of the seers and ministers of divine vengeance. Personal asceticism grew into public tyranny. The Puritan proscribed pleasure as an enemy for others as well as for himself. Ornaments, pictures and statues were pulled down or mutilated. The only pleasures permitted were the singing of Psalms through the nose, the edification of long sermons, the excitement of acrimonious controversies." [2]

[1] *History of England*, vol. i. p. 81.

[2] Taine, *History of English Literature*, vol. ii. p. 323.

In Scotland, according to Buckle, intolerance reached the utmost limits of bitterness and ferocity. Crowds of witches were dragged to the stake, private houses were searched for evidences of impiety, and the abjuration of popery was imposed under pain of perpetual imprisonment or death.[1]

It is not necessary, however, to resort to the extravagant descriptions of writers whose political or religious bias has affected their vision to find evidence of hypocrisy among the Puritans of the seventeenth century. Even some of the wisest leaders themselves recognised and deplored the fact. Here is the picture of a canting impostor which is evidently true to life. "I knew a man," says Samuel Torshell, in his book *The Hypocrite Discovered and Cured*, "who set out like Jehu against corruptions, and overran even good manners, in some houses that entertained him, so that he would tear and deface any devotional picture wheresoever he came across; and out of his detestation of Images would scarce endure a cross on a gentleman's coat-of-arms; who afterwards, when a favourable Prebend wind had cooled him, came to be active for superstitious innovations, and of a bitter spirit against the godly minded." [2]

On the whole Puritanism was stronger in revolt than in ascendancy; and in the days of its adversity, with all its excesses, it presents features which appeal more to our sympathies than in the days of its prosperity. Like Calvinism itself, it was pre-eminently a fighting faith. Its power lay in its protest. In vindicating the right of the individual conscience to resist the autocratic system which Charles and Laud embodied, it represents an influence which has leavened

[1] *History of Civilization in England*, vol. iii. chap. iii.

[2] Quoted by Henson, *Puritanism in England*, p. 66.

the whole political and religious consciousness of Britain, and its force is not yet spent. The sense of a divine call to witness for political justice as well as pure religion gave to Cromwell and his Ironsides an elevation of character and intensity of zeal almost amounting to fanaticism, which made them as soldiers well-nigh invincible. Cromwell himself was, at first at least, no place-seeker. The position he came to occupy was forced upon him. Thanks to his remarkable vision and sagacity he conducted himself in a situation of unique difficulty so as to win even the admiration of his foes. No one can read the Protector's letters and speeches without being impressed with the reality of the man. Amid all his perplexities he was groping after the right, and was prepared to sacrifice his own personal interests to serve and save his country. The high note of faith which he struck pervaded the whole army. His soldiers shared his belief that they were waging a divine crusade. The Old Testament was their charter; and in the spirit of the Judges of Israel they took up their cause and, like the elect of Gideon, followed their leader with unquestioning devotion. In Cromwell, both in his merits and demerits, all that is most typical of Puritan faith and life is embodied. In the masterful and unbending sternness of his character; in his simple, yet almost superstitious faith, confusing his own purpose with the divine will; in his high sense of justice, and, above all, in his splendid heroism and singleness of devotion to his God-appointed mission; he stands before us as the symbol of a power which has won for Britain her liberties and made her foremost among the peoples of the world.

As a moral protest against iniquity and as a practical force making for liberty of conscience the appeal of

Puritanism was not without effect. But its failure to meet the intellectual needs of an age of eager questioning and progressive thought has been frequently affirmed. It produced a great mass of sermonic literature, but with the exception of one or two devotional works, which have indeed become classics, hardly anything of intellectual value has survived. The period was rich in literary products, but the mental activity of the age owed little or nothing to the religious controversies which agitated the Church.[1] This view appears to me somewhat exaggerated. Many of the great literary works of the time, though they cannot be styled strictly theological, are largely coloured by the spiritual conflict of the age. Moreover, the writings on the Anglican side owe not a little of their vigour and fervency to the ideas of their Puritan contemporaries. Nor must it be overlooked that there was a by no means contemptible array of writers whose works are not yet obsolete, and whose thought and style have left their impress, not only on the theology, but also upon the character and language of the people. The English Reformation produced indeed no Calvin or Knox. But during the Puritan period and on the Puritan side there were not wanting a few men who by their writings upheld the principles of the Reformed Theology, and kept alive the evangelical fervour of the Protestant faith. Among these the names of Owen and Howe, Goodwin and Baxter stand out. Some of them were not merely preachers but scholars, men of great talent and learning, who filled high offices in Church and State as well as in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Of Richard Baxter only, the author of *The Saints' Rest*, probably the most notable, and certainly the most influential

[1] This view is held by Hensley Henson in his *Puritanism in England*.

of the Puritan divines, the briefest mention is here possible.

Unlike his contemporaries, Owen and Howe, Baxter did not enjoy the privileges of a university training. "My faults," he said, "are no disgrace to any university, for I was of none." But in spite of educational disadvantages and almost constant ill-health, he was an indefatigable student, and became one of the most learned men of his time. The reading of Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity* reconciled him, he tells us, to Episcopal ordination; but a fuller study of contemporary literature tended to change his views; and to the end of his days his interests were with the Puritans. During the civil war he sided with the Parliament, and as chaplain of the Protector he witnessed many a skirmish. His relations with Cromwell were not always of the happiest. It was scarcely possible that two such strong and independent minds should converse on the most vital topics without difference of view. The court preacher was an outspoken monitor, and he did not hesitate to testify against the sins of politicians who maintained divisions for their own ends. Though often treated with great harshness, Baxter himself was not intolerant. Presbyterian though he was, he was not unfavourable to modified Episcopacy, and on one occasion he actually refused a bishopric. But his hardships outweighed his honours. Bowed down with bodily infirmities, he was driven from his beloved Kidderminster and his attached flock, to pass the remainder of his days in loathsome jails and precarious hiding-places. Yet in spite of continual penury and almost ceaseless pain, he achieved works without a parallel in the history of English theological literature. The Puritans generally were men of extraordinary zeal; but it is doubtful

if any in that serious age came nigh to Richard Baxter in sheer mental effort and unrelieved tension, unbroken, as we are told, by a single smile or one recorded relaxation. He was the author of no less than 168 separate volumes, ranging over the whole circle of the moral sciences. He was engaged in endless controversy. Along with an incisive pen and forceful style he possessed a sense of grim irony tempered with a certain courteous dignity, which excited the ire, but also the respect, of his opponents. Of his works, many of which are given over "to the dust and the moths," *The Saints' Everlasting Rest* and *The Reformed Pastor* are still esteemed. The seventeenth century was an age of diaries. But not even the Journal of Fox nor the personal reminiscences of Pepys and Evelyn surpass in vividness and vivacity of description the remarkable autobiographical work entitled *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, which first saw the light in 1696, after the author's death.

Of his religious opinions and philosophy of life it is not necessary to speak. They belong to an age that is gone. The significance of Baxter lies not there, but in the spirit of the man and the force of his character. With the exception of Grotius he is the earliest of that long line of apologetic writers who have sought to establish the truth of Christianity by a systematic exhibition of the evidences in favour of its divine origin.[1]

Baxter may be regarded as one of the mediating divines, whose efforts, so often misunderstood, were sincerely put forth to bridge over the differences of extremists. Calvinist and Arminian found in him a rallying-point. While admitting the merits of rival sects, he actually agreed with none. But in all his

[1] See especially *The Catholic Theology*, and *Methodus Theologiae*.

writings he did not fail to lift the minds of his readers above the smaller matters of political and ecclesiastical contention with which his age was so much engrossed, to those larger spiritual issues which appeal to man as man, and are the concern, not of one, but of every age.[1]

Apart from treatises of a directly theological nature, two imaginative works, among the noblest treasures of our literature, stand out as immediate fruits of the period, and owe their special features and peculiar force to their Puritan origin. These are Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress.* Milton is not only the highest manifestation but the completest type of the movement. His life is contemporaneous with its history, and his successive writings mark the stages of its progress. Though reared a Puritan, the boy's education was not narrow or illiberal, and his youth reveals how much joy and freedom could dwell in a Puritan home. The faith in which he was nurtured was confirmed by the convictions of maturer years. While still a student at Cambridge, Laud became archbishop, and the young man discerned that if he was to retain his freedom of thought it was not possible for him to subscribe to the authority and order which Laud enforced. The Church, as it was being constituted was, he felt, no place for him. But though he was not to be a clergyman, he was determined to live and work "as ever in my great Taskmaster's eye." His Italian journey, while it enriched his mind, did not alter his aims, and he hastened home to bear his part in the strife of his country. "In the things of the mind," said Cromwell, "we look for no compulsion but that of light and reason." With this sentiment Milton was in full

[1] See *Essays in Eccles.* Biography by Sir James Stephens, p. 377.

agreement. "Give me liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties." His *Areopagitica* is the noblest plea for liberty of thought in the English language. But his great Epic poem, *Paradise Lost*, begun in early life and only completed in the quietness of age, coloured and inspired throughout by Puritan theology, is the embodiment of his philosophy of life. While all critics agree in praising the style, there is a difference of opinion in regard to the matter of the poem. The whole conception, it is said, is framed too much in congruity with the modes of thinking prevalent in the poet's own age, to retain its efficacy. But this objection, it has been pointed out,[1] would apply to all great poetry and art; and would affect the painting of Michel Angelo as much as the epic of Milton. It is true, the form and structure of the picture are based upon a theology and cosmogony which are now obsolete; but the moral and spiritual truths touching the relation of God and man are eternal, true for all worlds, and independent of any scheme of the universe under which they are symbolized. What Milton offers us is not a literal statement, such as a theological or scientific text-book might essay, but a *Vorstellung* or symbolic representation of things. An attempt is made to get behind the world of phenomena, and think of all being as a unity—a unity in the mind of God. *Paradise Lost* is a philosophy which deals with the great things of earth and heaven, of God and man, of good and evil. Underneath the particular symbolism of the poem the reader is brought into constant touch with the sublime and the awful, the infinite and eternal. And yet it is not too much to say that *Paradise Lost* is essentially

[1] Professor Masson, Introduction to Globe Edition of *Milton's Poetical Works*.

the product and monument of Puritanism. Only a mind bred on Bible truth and enthralled by the sublime Calvinistic conception of Divine sovereignty could have so wonderfully achieved the task which its author essayed,

> "To assert eternal Providence
> And justify the ways of God to man."

The works of Bunyan are also historical documents of inestimable value. Though they represent another aspect of life they are not less faithful as a witness, and are even more significant as a portrait of the time, than the writings of Milton. It is not, indeed, until we read Bunyan and George Fox that we catch the authentic voice of the age and learn what the Reformation in England really meant. Men may think as they please of English Dissent, but until they get at the heart of that experience as depicted in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, their view will be but partial and superficial. Bunyan wrote all his books out of the realities of his own soul. His four greatest works owe their originality to one indelible experience. "Christian" and "Mansoul" go through the same conflicts as Bunyan himself did, and reach the same state of security and comfort. It may be that the theology of these writings is faulty, and the doctrines underlying the narrative, narrow and gloomy. It is true that Christ is only reached when the journey is ended and the dark river crossed. There is, it may be objected, an absence of the recognition of the intimate relationships of home life; and the Christian career is represented as a selfish and unsocial adventure of the individual soul. But in its main features the allegory is true to the profoundest experience of the spiritual life. Whatever be our creed, the human heart will never cease to find in this masterpiece of literature

a faithful transcript of its yearnings after the things of God, which can be reached only through anguish and sacrifice. It is the story of this man, written in his books with his own life-blood, which shows us Puritanism at its grandest and has done so much to keep alive to our day the spirit which gave to Puritanism its power.[1]

II

At the opposite pole from Puritanism there existed a party within the Anglican Church which, in virtue of its Romish tendencies, has received the name of *Anglo-Catholic*. It is hardly possible to conceive a more complete antagonism than that presented by these two branches of Christian faith. Even while sharing the same articles of belief, their whole attitude to truth, their theory of Church polity, their methods of worship and ideals of life were widely different. The Puritans were primarily theologians, whose interests lay in the realm of abstract doctrine. The Anglo-Catholics were primarily ecclesiastics, whose aims were directed more to the political organization of the Church and the culture of those elements which tended to conserve its prestige as a social institution. The Puritans were for the most part Calvinists, whose God of absolute power and purity would not permit His Church to be merged in the State or served of any but the pure in life. The Anglicans were on the whole Arminians, who met the claim of Calvinism by the assertion of its inconsistency with the constitution of the primitive Church as expressed in the councils and writings of the fathers.[2]

[1] See a remarkably fresh and suggestive chapter on Bunyan in *Poets and Puritans*, by T. R. Glover, p. 115 ff.

[2] Cf. Fairbairn, *Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 182.

On the Anglican side the foremost name is that of Richard Hooker, the great expounder and defender of the creed and polity of the Church of England. In his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* we trace the ideals embodied in the Elizabethan settlement, and find in it the first great systematic development of Anglican Theology. Though the work is a defence of the Anglican position, as assailed on the one side by the Church of Rome and on the other by the Presbyterian party within the Reformed Church, it is something more and greater than a mere polemic. It deals with the whole nature of Christianity as concrete in individual and corporate life. It starts from the principle that all society, and especially the spiritual society which we call the Church, is based on certain fundamental laws expressive of the creative Will in the physical world and the moral constitution of man; and that these laws are manifestations, however veiled and imperfect, of the nature of God Himself. At the outset the author strikes the keynote of the whole work in laying down the principle of the unity of all law as the expression of one Divine Will. Whether revealed in nature, the life of man, or the Word of God, law is one and sacred as proceeding from the source of all truth. Upon this basic principle Hooker rears the entire structure of his sublime argument. The Puritans, he maintains, lay under a twofold fallacy. On the one hand it was held that no law could be of permanent obligation which was not expressed in Scripture; and on the other hand, that no law contained in Scripture could fail to be of permanent obligation. From the first there resulted their hatred of all ceremonial not expressly enjoined in the Bible; from the second, their refusal to recognise any development of Christian truth or practice not provided for in the Apostolic

age. In opposition to these views, Hooker maintained that the reason of man and the traditions of the Church have their place not less than Holy Scripture in determining what is meet both for the Church and the individual believer. And where no explicit Scriptural command is laid down, the Church at each stage of its history is free to adopt such forms as it deems fitted to its needs, provided they do not conflict with fundamental moral principles. The position which Hooker here takes is unassailable, and the principle is of far-reaching application. It refers not to matters of Church polity and worship only, but to the whole circle of divine truth. Particularly it has a bearing upon the problems which centre in the Person and teaching of Christ. There is a remarkable strain of modernity in Hooker. He had some foregleam of the historical method which has been so fruitful in its appliance to the interpretation of Scripture. He is one of the earliest writers in England to perceive that the New Testament records do not impose upon us a fixed and completed revelation, but contain the seeds and potencies of yet ampler truths ; and that it is the duty of the Church not to rest in past forms or findings, as if these were final, but, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to press on to fuller and more adequate expressions of the mind of Christ. Hooker was a man of singular beauty of character. He did not entangle himself with political controversy, and the argument of his great work is conducted from beginning to end upon a lofty plane of philosophic calm. It has been truly remarked that the Church of England has never produced a finer intellect or more gracious personality.[1] He founded, indeed, no school of thought, but more than any other he gave an elevation and

[1] See Tulloch, *Rational Theology*.

breadth to Anglican theology which it has never entirely lost.

If all the churchmen of his day had been as tolerant as "the judicious Hooker," there would have been little bitterness and no persecution. It is scarcely possible to conceive men more unlike the great bishop than Whitgift, Parker and Laud. After his death the Church was as unfortunate in its leaders as the State was in its rulers. The growth of what has been called Anglo-Catholicism marks the decay of the more catholic spirit. The earliest relapse, if it may be so styled, toward the system abandoned in the first enthusiasm of the Reformation, began about the end of the sixteenth century and rapidly gained ground in the reign of James and his successors. Though the Anglicans of this school professed a repugnance to the traditions of Rome, their reverence for the primitive Church and admiration for ancient forms of ritual, gave not a little ground for the accusation of Romanizing tendencies. Of this school Bishop Andrewes was the chief theological exponent, while Laud was its foremost political champion. Of all English prelates Laud deviated most from the principles of the Reformation. He was a pronounced foe of Calvinism, and his aversion to the Puritans and their ways was openly avowed and unflinchingly pursued. Of proud, egotistical and malignant mood, as lacking in sagacity as in sympathy, it was he who forced the pace of civil war, and did more than any other to hasten the collapse of royal absolutism.

Andrewes was a man of a different type. All evidence attests to the purity and gentleness of his nature. His great learning and manifold literary and scientific attainments won for him the friendship of scholars like Grotius, Causabon and Bacon, who acknowledged

in him an erudition akin to their own. But though a scholar, he was not a recluse like Hooker. He mingled with the world and took part in the affairs both of Church and State. His influence was exerted, indeed, more by social intercourse and practical counsel than by his writings. With the exception of his published sermons and his justly admired *Devotions* few of his literary productions have now any significance. His High Church proclivities were pronounced. He claimed for Episcopacy a divine right. He maintained the reality of the actual Presence in the Eucharist, and generally supported the usage of Roman symbols in public worship.

Andrewes deserves to be remembered as marking a stage in the unfolding of the life and thought of the Church of England. He represents Anglo-Catholicism at its best. Though he was decided in his views, his influence was on the side of tolerance. If Hooker may be said to have maintained the claims of reason against bondage to the letter of Scripture, Andrewes claimed for the English Church, not merely its full status and validity as part of the Church Universal, but also its uniqueness as the direct and legitimate heir and successor of the Apostolic institution.

III

After the Restoration a change came over the spirit and method of the Anglican Church. The Laudian system had failed, and its collapse inclined some who had been brought up in that school to larger toleration. The change is visible in the *Moderate Episcopacy* of Ussher, the *Irenicum* of Stillingfleet, the milder policy of Bramwell, the pupil of Laud, and the moderation of Sanderson, the disciple of Hooker. But the more

tolerant attitude towards Puritanism was due to the rise of a party of theologians whose harmonizing spirit won for them the title of the Liberal or Latitudinarian School. The leaders of this movement, lacking sympathy with either side of the contending factions, sought to discover a middle way of reconciling the differences which distracted the religious thought of the country. Though dissatisfied as much with the high pretentions of the ritualists as with the rigid tenets of the Calvinists, it is noteworthy that the instigators of the movement belonged almost without exception to the Anglican Church. They tended to Arminianism, and laid emphasis upon the function of the mind to legislate in religious and ecclesiastical matters. The distinctive feature of the school, and that which gives it significance in the development of Christian thought, is the importance which it attached to the prerogative of reason in the realm of religious conviction, and the consequent spirit of latitude it advocated in regard to diversity of thought. Already Milton's *Areopagitica*, from the Puritan side, embodied in majestic language the feelings which animated the new venture. Owen and Baxter, though they suffered keenly from persecution, did not hesitate to preach liberty of thinking. It is a mistake to assume, as some historians are apt to do, that hatred of tyranny and love of justice and freedom were confined to one side only. As Sir Leslie Stephen has truly said, "the doctrine of toleration had been burnt into their minds by the struggles in which each party in turn had learned, by sad experience, the evils of persecution." [1] When Locke at a later period wrote his famous letters on toleration, he was but summing up the convictions of his most illustrious predecessors.

[1] *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. i. p. 76.

Lord Falkland is commonly designated the head and front of this group of mediating thinkers. Though personally a believer in Episcopacy, he denied its divine right, and was opposed to all arrogance and exclusiveness in relation to those who disagreed. He held that we have no other alternative but to follow reason in the interpretation of Scripture. Every Christian must in the end rest upon his own understanding of the Church's dogmas. The right of rational inquiry appears to him more sacred and truly religious than any blind faith whatsoever. It was not indifference that led him to this position in regard to belief. He had a deep and serious interest in religion. He revered greatly the Church of England. His aim was to make it broad enough to embrace all differences of genuine faith.

Similar views were expressed by John Hales, who was born in 1584 and died in 1656. A loyal son of the Church, he was a profound student and enlightened theologian. His liberal-minded *Tract on Schism*, brought him for a time under the displeasure of Laud. The distinctive tenet of his teaching—as indeed that of the whole party—is that theological differences are not really religious differences and should not break the unity of the common faith. "Heresy is an act of will, not of reason." "It is pride and passion more than conscience which are the causes of separation and disagreement." He lays stress, like Falkland, upon the duty of personal inquiry as the corrective of credulity and the guarantee of truth. Quiet and unobtrusive as Hales' life was, he exercised considerable influence upon the more thoughtful minds of his time. He has been falsely charged with Socinian tendencies. Like his friend Falkland, he avoided extremes. He was the friend of liberty and the foe of tyranny, and like Hooker—whom he greatly admired and somewhat

resembled in spirit—a devout representative of the truest Catholicity.

William Chillingworth, who was born in 1602, and was therefore eighteen years younger than Hales, occupies a more prominent place in the history of the Church. While a student he was almost persuaded to enter the Romish fold, but was rescued from the clutches of the Jesuits by the intervention of Laud. His great work, *The Religion of Protestants*, is regarded by many to this day as "The bulwark of the Protestant Faith." On a single sentence of that book his fame may be said to rest. When asked what he meant by saying the religion of Protestants was "the safe way of salvation," he replied that "the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants." By that, he said, he "did not understand the doctrine of Luther or Calvin, the Catechism of Heidelberg, nor the articles of the Church of England, but that wherein they all agree and to which they all subscribe as a perfect rule of their faith and action." This sentence blazoned on banners and trumpeted on platforms, has been seized by various sects, not as the manifesto of freedom, but as the battle-cry of contending partisans. It has been much misconstrued and made the dictum of a shallow bibliolatry. But Chillingworth well knew that religion was not the worship of a book but a way of life. Above all mental assent to Revelation, it includes the practice of faith and love and purity. What the author really meant, as may be gathered from the context, was that the Bible is "a perfect rule of faith and action." The work to which Chillingworth owes his reputation has been differently estimated. While some praise it as a masterpiece of thought and a classic of literature,[1] others regard it as the work of a second-

[1] See Tulloch, *Rational Theology in England in Seventeenth Century.*

rate thinker—"an overgrown pamphlet with well-nigh all the faults incidental to that form of literature." [1] The book certainly suffers from being a reply to a forgotten Jesuitical work.[2] Though it is often turgid in style, the argument of the treatise is forcible and effective. Locke somewhat ambiguously remarks of it "that it supplies an admirable training for the logical powers of man; though the general reader is likely to find it somewhat cumbrous."

The vigour and purport of Chillingworth's book may be inferred from the following passage, which is a fair sample of many others. "Take away this persecuting, burning, cursing, damning of men, for not subscribing to the words of men as the words of God; require Christians only to believe Christ and to call no man master but Himself; let those leave claiming infallibility that have no title to it, and let them that in their words disclaim it, disclaim it likewise in their actions; in a word, take away tyranny, which is the Devil's instrument to support errors and superstitions and impostors in the several parts of the world which could not otherwise long withstand the truth; in a word, take away tyranny and restore Christians to the just and full liberty of captivating their understanding to Scripture only." [3]

But passing over others, the most renowned representative of this phase of mediating theology is, without doubt, Jeremy Taylor. In the exuberance of poetic fancy, vast learning and untiring industry, he stands almost unrivalled in the annals of Anglican Churchmen. His theology bears the stamp of his time. But though he wrote upon almost every doctrinal

[1] *Masters in English Theology*, p. 141.

[2] A work on Charity by a Jesuit writer, Knot.

[3] *Religion of Protestants*, edition 1638, p. 198.

theme, it is not as a theologian in the technical sense that he is greatest. He has been called " the Shakespeare of English prose." In the stately dignity of his language he is hardly surpassed by Hooker, while in the splendour of his imagery Milton is his only rival. Of the many works which flowed from his pen his *Defence of the Liturgy, Doctrine and Practice of Repentance, Ductor Dubitantium*, a treatise on Christian Casuistry, his devotional work, *Holy Living and Holy Dying*, and the beautiful though less known *Life of Christ*, deserve to be mentioned. In such matters as his appeal to Patristic authority, and his belief in Episcopacy and Sacramentarianism, he reveals his affinities with the school of Laud and Andrewes. He was a strong Arminian ; and in regard to original sin, regeneration and human ability, he vehemently repudiated the Calvinistic position.

Though he early acquired fame as a preacher and became ultimately a bishop of the Irish Church, Jeremy Taylor never attained to the position of distinction of which his youthful promise and exceptional talent gave token. His declining years were spent among a people who were little fitted to appreciate his genius, and his last days were clouded by sore domestic trials. It is almost difficult to realise that he died at the comparatively early age of fifty-five. He was acknowledged by all to be a man of true piety, whose beauty of character, intensified by sorrow, surpassed even his intellectual brilliance.

His treatise on *Liberty of Prophesying*, which more than any other shows his sympathy with Hales and Chillingworth, strikes the key-note of tolerance and charity to which he gives such eloquent utterance in his life and writings. It is possible that Chillingworth's *Religion of Protestants*, published ten years before,

exerted no little effect upon a mind so impressionable as Taylor's. But in breadth of view, as in philosophic grasp and literary grace, it far surpasses the work of his predecessor. The duty of unrestricted toleration both in Church and State in regard to speculative thought, the simplification of the terms of Christian communion, the assertion of the province of reason in matters of religion—are urged with a force of appeal and fullness of illustration which, as has been not unjustly said, achieved for the cause of toleration what Milton's *Areopagitica* did for the "Liberty of unlicensed Printing." "Faith," says Taylor, "is not an intellectual habit directed towards certain doctrines, but simply a personal acceptance of Jesus Christ"; and "all who believe in Jesus Christ as Son of God and Saviour of the world," he would recognise "as members of the Christian Church." "To make the way to Heaven straiter than God made it, or to deny to communicate with those whom God will vouchsafe to be invited, or to refuse our own charity to those who have the same faith, because they have not all our opinions, is impious and schismatic." [1]

It has been objected by Hallam [2], who, it may be observed, does not value very highly either Taylor's literary style or his logical cogency, that in practice he was not faithful to his professions of tolerance, and that in later life he abandoned the views which he had earlier so valiantly advocated. It is true that in his famous Sermon preached before the University of Dublin in 1662 he seems to modify his former principles. It would, however, be probably an injustice to doubt that, in spite of a few vacillating

[1] *Liberty of Prophesying*, sect. xxiv.

[2] *Literature of Europe*, vol. ii. pp. 253 and 447-9. See also Coleridge, *Notes on English Divines*, vol. i. p. 209.

expressions due to his habit of balancing both sides of an argument, and perhaps also to a temporary sense of bitterness which the circumstances of the time may have aroused, the author of the *Liberty of Prophesying* ceased to maintain those principles of charity, even to the end, which it was the main object of his life and writings to expound.

On looking back over the period we have surveyed, of the two forces, the Puritan and the Anglo-Catholic, one cannot but feel that it is the former that has left the more distinctive mark upon history. The Elizabethan age showed an energy as intense as that of Athens at the height of its power. With an outlook upon a new world of possibilities, the nobler spirits of the period found the boundary-line of thought and moral rectitude pushed forward beyond the limits which had satisfied their ancestors. It is hardly strange that those "spacious times" gave birth to the greatest of dramatists, who worked not for an age but for all time. Shakespeare's largeness of view was shared by the foremost of his contemporaries and immediate successors. Bacon, Spenser, Milton aimed at depicting man as he ought to be. The idealism of the age influenced many who were scarcely conscious of the sources of their inspiration. Puritanism as an ecclesiastical system was indeed hostile to literary effort and aesthetic culture. But the essence of Puritanism did not lie in its negations and prohibitions, but in the positive aims and aspirations of its best spirits. It desired to avoid the excesses of the world and win for man the independence of his soul. It was this supreme purpose which gave to men like Baxter, intense but essentially large-minded, the name of Puritan. Filled with the consciousness of God, these

men counted it their vocation to make His will prevail upon the earth. They fought the battles of the Lord, and laboured to build up a theocratic commonwealth. They threw themselves into great philanthropic causes, and even became the pioneers of trade and commerce. But notwithstanding these activities, they were of necessity individualistic. They were constantly haunted with an uneasy feeling that secular affairs were bulking too largely in their life. The worth of the person seemed to them of more account than the weal of the State, and they were more concerned to purge men's souls of worldliness than to increase the prestige of the country.

Such a system of thought could not fail to be repulsive to some of the more moderate and enlightened spirits of the age. It would be futile to belittle the work of the liberal school, who sought to strike the fetters from the intellect and provide larger room for liberty of worship and religious opinion. But no one can read the works of such men as Hales, Chillingworth and even Jeremy Taylor, and others of this party, without perceiving in what a narrow prescribed area of thought they moved. They have no large horizons. They are occupied for the most part with the little affairs of parochial ecclesiasticism. They meant well, and did excellent work in their own day, but their view was limited. Puritanism was something deeper and broader. It dealt with larger issues. As its outward vestments fell away it revealed the strength and vitality of great fundamental principles. The excrescences of Calvinism, the elevation of the few at the expense of the many, which seemed to some to be the characteristic note of the doctrine of Election, passed into oblivion; but the profounder principles of the Sovereignty of God and the Sanctity

and vocation of the human soul, with all the vital truths connected with these convictions, lived on and became the permanent contribution of this age to its successors. The Greatness of Puritanism, in spite of its inconsistencies, which belonged to its age and environment rather than to its essence, lies in its vivid consciousness of God and the spiritual world and the emphasis it placed on the sacredness and purpose of life as entrusted to man by God.

CHAPTER V

THE THEOLOGY OF RATIONALISM

THERE was a tendency on the part of some writers of the Victorian Era to treat the eighteenth century with a measure of disparagement and even of neglect. Carlyle speaks of it, more than once, as a barren and unproductive age, while some Anglican historians regard it as destitute of all moral interest, and therefore as practically negligible from a religious point of view. "It is usual," says Mark Pattison,[1] "for the High Churchman, in constructing his 'Catena Patrum,' to close his list with Waterland, and then leap at once to 1833, when the *Tracts for the Times* commenced." History written after this fashion is obviously worthless. Facts cannot be disposed of simply by ignoring them. For good or for ill, each age is a link in the chain of continuity, and the impartial historian cannot afford to disregard any particular period, however prosaic in thought and barren of results it may appear to be.

But, as a matter of fact, the alleged inferiority of the eighteenth century cannot be defended. The consensus of opinion has indeed entirely changed in regard to the character of this era. And so far from being now deemed an unproductive age, it is discovered to be one of singular fruitfulness, possessing elements

[1] *Essays and Reviews.*

of absorbing interest for the student of religious history. It was a period of new beginnings and radical changes. As the seed-plot of many of the ideas, which only came to fruition in the following century, it is especially valuable to the historian. While the religious outlook of the seventeenth century was still largely dominated by Scholastic thought, the eighteenth century is distinguished from its predecessors by its temper of radicalism. It made the attempt to break with the past and re-examine the foundations of belief. It is the epoch of Rationalism. That which is common to every phase of its mental activity is the tendency to bring all ideas and institutions to the bar of reason, and to modify, if not to reject, the traditionary estimate of man and the world in their relation to God. It is true the Rationalism of this age was of a superficial order. It did not possess either the technical knowledge or the scientific instruments adequate to undertake the task of real criticism. Two defects especially marked the age—a narrow individualism, and a lack of historical consciousness. In comparison with the nineteenth century the eighteenth was subjective, abstract and static in its attitude to the problems of life. But notwithstanding its patent limitations the legacy of this period to succeeding times is by no means negligible ; and it is possible to trace here the beginnings of many of the reconstructive movements of thought which have enriched and revolutionized our own age.

I

Rationalism, though it attained to greater dimensions on the Continent, made its appearance first in England. It is true that early in the seventeenth century rationalistic tendencies were prevalent in Holland. Here

Descartes, though a Frenchman, laid the foundations of Modern Philosophy. In this home of Free Thought also, Spinoza formulated his great Pantheistic system, and Pierre Bayle first gave to the world his famous Dictionary of Philosophy. The views of these writers spread throughout Europe, and no doubt to some extent affected English thought. Cartesianism as a whole, and more especially its development at the hands of Spinoza, found probably but few actual disciples in this country; but the two chief notes struck by the French philosopher—the sufficiency of Reason as a criterion of truth and the mathematical method as its instrument of discovery—exerted considerable influence, not only upon scientific procedure, but also upon Theological speculation.

Second only in importance to Descartes' influence was that of Bacon. Himself an Englishman, his philosophy had probably more affinity with the English mind. Bacon and Descartes have often been compared, and they have certain superficial points of resemblance. Each was the prophet of a new era. Each recognised the need of a new method of science. Both start with doubt and accept as data only what comes within their own consciousness and can be verified by reason. But they were wholly independent of one another. The English philosopher was indeed a quarter of a century earlier on the field than the French thinker. The English Chancellor broke the supremacy of Aristotelianism which had long held sway in England, and did not a little to emancipate English thought from Mediæval traditions. Already the discoveries of Copernicus, Galileo and Kepler had awakened the intellectual interest of Europe, and had tended to undermine established beliefs. Bacon gave a new impulse and direction to contemporary thought,

partly by vindicating the claims of ordinary experience in regard to social and political topics, and more particularly by emphasizing the importance of a scientific observation of nature.[1] He did not, however, break with the Christian Faith. He was willing to permit theology to rule in its own domain. Science and Revelation were, though apparently conflicting, really complementary sources of knowledge. He held it to be our duty to own the teaching of Scripture even when it seemed to be incredible to reason. But though commending absolute submission in matters of faith, his general mental outlook upon nature and life tended to foster a rationalistic interpretation of the world. Bacon is the true father of realistic philosophy. Hobbes, Locke, Hume, are his lineal descendants; and apart from him the whole school of sensationalism cannot be rightly grasped.

Before we actually reach the eighteenth century, two contemporaries and friends of Bacon demand attention because of the influence their writings have exerted upon the history of rationalism—Lord Herbert of Cherbury and Thomas Hobbes.

Lord Herbert (1583-1648) has been styled the father of English Deism. He was certainly the first to give utterance to the view which afterwards became the common feature of the movement, that the essential truth of Christianity does not consist in its supernatural doctrines, but in those beliefs which are common to all forms of religion. The essence of all religion, he held, may be summed up in five 'Notitiae Communes': There is a Supreme Being; He is the object of worship;

[1] He himself, however, was strangely ignorant of the achievements of the principal scientists of his own day, and the few isolated truths he is supposed to have discovered are to be found rather in the writings of his far greater namesake, Roger Bacon, of the thirteenth century. See Lilly, *Chapters in European History*, vol. i. p. 298.

Piety and virtue are the chief elements of worship; Sins are to be repented of and expiated; There are divine rewards and punishments both in this world and the next. These 'self-evident truths,' which priestcraft has continually obscured, it is the business of Christianity to restore. Herbert has been acclaimed one of the earliest champions of religious freedom in England. But the independence which he demanded consisted chiefly in striking out what was most distinctive in the Christian Faith.

It was only natural that the civil wars of this age, which had cruelly rent every country of Europe, should search all earnest minds and force them back upon first principles. This effect was produced even before the Restoration upon Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), whose antagonism toward current belief was more pronounced than that of Herbert, and whose material empiricism had a more destructive influence. Like Herbert, he had lived for some years in France, and had come into contact with Descartes, from whom he had probably imbibed his strong views of individualism. Hobbes preached a relentless materialistic egoism. His *Leviathan*, published in 1651, in which he sets forth his opinions concerning the nature of man and the laws of society, is one of the decisive landmarks of English Philosophy. Only by absolutism can the safety of society be secured. If 'War of all against all' is to be avoided, a compromise must be come to by which all agree to renounce their freedom and place their power in the hands of one absolute sovereign. This renunciation of liberty is based upon unblushing utilitarianism. The State is to be regarded as the representative of God. If the State bids a man violate his conscience, then it is his but to obey; the responsibility is God's. This audacious system of materialism

which reduces Right to Might and places man with all his mental and spiritual powers in absolute subjection to earthly authority, was a desperate attempt to cast out the evil of subjectivism by the greater evil of despotism. It is the denial of all freedom and the despair of all truth. The true significance of the *Leviathan*, as has been pointed out,[1] is the vigour with which it raises the ever-recurring question whether the last word belongs to an order within or an order without. Is religion but a matter of convenience? Is freedom but a word of necessity? Are truth, justice, honour, but the arbitrary decrees of a ruling sovereign? Are "covenants," as Hobbes puts it, "without the sword but words of no strength to secure a man"? The merit of Hobbes' work was the exposure of hypocrisy and the attempt to find a more radical method of exorcising the demon of civil and religious strife. But its chief value is of a negative kind. It shows what kind of world we should be forced to inhabit if the distinctive prerogatives of the soul were to be renounced and the conscience of mankind was to be subject only to the dictates of despotism. Though professing to be favourably disposed to ecclesiastical Christianity, in emptying life of all the higher sanctions he practically undermines the real significance of Christian truth. Against Hobbes, says Warburton, the whole Church militant took up arms. And the answers to the *Leviathan* would form a library. His philosophical antagonists were Cumberland, Cudworth, Shaftesbury, Clark, Butler and Hutcheson, the mention of whose names carries us well into the eighteenth century.

The writers who have been briefly characterised—Descartes, Bacon and Hobbes—sowed the seeds of the

[1] See Oman, *Problem of Faith and Freedom*.

rationalistic spirit which, as has been stated, is the dominant feature of the eighteenth century theology. The intellectual activity of the period centres in what has been called the Deistic Controversy. The chief actors in the conflict are largely forgotten ; the methods of attack and modes of defence have become obsolete. The importance of the strife lies in the fact that it reflects the spirit of the age. The tendency to reduce religion to mere morality, to emphasize the non-miraculousness of Christianity, to make faith a balance of probabilities, and creeds a matter of individual choice ; the domination of the intellect, the self-interestedness and self-complacency, the dimming ideals and expiring hopes—all the trend and temper of the century is mirrored and outlined in Deism. The outlook has changed. But the causes of the change are to be found in this controversy.

II

Locke's *Essay Concerning the Human Understanding*, which appeared in 1690, may be taken as the starting-point of Deism. The author tells us that the treatise had its origin in a casual discussion among a few friends regarding the principles of morality and religion. Finding they came to no satisfactory conclusion, it occurred to Locke "that before we set ourselves upon enquiries of that nature it was necessary to examine our own abilities and see what objects our understandings were and were not fitted to deal with." The practical nature of the work is thus indicated. It was no mere academic study, but one which bore immediately upon the religious interests of the time. Locke's plan was to examine the mind. He repudiated Descartes' theory of innate ideas. All knowledge, he

held, is experimental, obtained through sensation and reflection. God, the soul, the world, are not mere intuitions, as Descartes contended, but inferences from observed facts. This mode of reasoning, inaugurated by Locke, determined the method in all departments of thought, and became the mode of procedure of the most notable theological works of the period, especially of the Boyle Lectures, of which Clarke's *Being and Attributes of God* is the most illustrious example. Locke himself applied the same principle to his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, published five years after the *Essay*.

Religion is simply a fact of experience, not a deduction from abstract reasoning. Given the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, clearly evidenced by Scripture, and the whole of Christianity may be deduced. In both these works, as well as in his *Epistola de Tolerentia*, he aimed at promoting the union of Christians, and making the comprehension and practice of religious tolerance the ideal of all reasonable men. Religion and morality were to be united, Secularism on the one hand, and Sacerdotalism on the other, were to disappear, and Church and State were to become allies. Locke entertained Cromwell's faith that the sense of things spiritual needs only the light of reason to bring it home to men. It was a noble ideal. But as Hobbes had put it, " who is to ride in front ? "

Locke was not a Deist, and he would have repudiated the name. But his works were the quarry from which both the assailants and defenders drew their arguments. It is difficult to define Deism. The term ' deist ' is now generally employed to designate a certain conception of the Deity which excludes the notion of trinity. But in the eighteenth century the word was used loosely, and applied to those writers who, while

not rejecting revealed religion, tended to disparage its claims and to lay stress upon the sufficiency of the religion of nature. Pünjer defines Deism as " a general movement in the way of intellectual enquiry tending to derive all positive religions from one ' natural religion.' " There was often no distinct line of demarcation separating those who denied and those who affirmed the deistic position. On the part of both alike there was a disposition to minimise the supernatural element and regard it as something supplemental or additional to nature. The Immanence of God was an idea foreign to the theological thought of the period. God and creation, Spirit and nature, were divorced. The world was conceived as a piece of mechanism, complete and self-sufficient—a vast organism governed by the law of gravitation, a gigantic piece of clock-work fabricated and set in motion by its maker, and guaranteed to go without further interference. Locke's view was typical of the age. A thorough-going rationalist, he cannot conceive the possibility of an appeal to any other authority than that of reason. Christianity is to be proved in the same way as any other fact of history. It is less a revelation of God's true relation to man than a new promulgation of the moral law. Its value resides in the fact that " it is a great legislative reform."

Toland, an impecunious and struggling denizen of Grub Street, was the first to approach the problem which Locke had raised—the relation of natural to revealed religion. His view of the question is indicated in the title of his work, *Christianity not Mysterious*, published in 1696, the year following Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity*. Toland expresses the general attitude of the deists, to be satisfied with nothing that did not admit of a simple and clear

explanation. We cannot accept what we do not understand. Everything that smacks of mystery must be rejected. As nothing is contrary to reason, so nothing can be above reason. There is a sense indeed, Toland allows, in which everything is a mystery. We do not know the essence of things. But neither God nor the Soul of man is more a mystery than "a spire of grass." But if everything is thus mysterious, that is equivalent to saying that nothing is mysterious. Like most of his successors, Toland moved on the surface of things. He did not perceive that the complete excision of mystery from Christianity reduced religion, as religion, to a nonentity. A religion without mystery is a religion without God. Yet there was a strain of mysticism even in Toland. He was the only deistical writer who had any affinity with Pantheism, inasmuch as he saw in the spire of grass and the being of God, one and the same spirit of life.

If there can be no doctrine contrary to or above reason, what, it may be asked, is the purpose of revelation? If it does not make known to us some truth which could not be evolved by man's natural faculties, is it not superfluous? The view suggested, but not elaborated by Toland, was that revelation is merely "a means of information." There were those of the deists who were not slow to draw the inference, that if there is any value in supernatural truth at all, it is simply supplemental, and that its main object is to corroborate what we already know.

This was practically the position taken by Tindal (1657-1733). Unlike his contemporary Toland, Tindal was a Fellow of All Souls, Oxford, a man of quiet and secluded life. It was not till his seventy-fourth year that he came forth from his retirement by publishing an anonymous and unfinished work bearing the title,

Christianity as old as Creation. It is written in the form of a dialogue. It is full of repetitions, marred by frequent inaccuracies, and the defence of the Christian side is committed to "one of the greatest weaklings known in controversy." But notwithstanding these defects it is one of the most important documents of the whole deistic controversy. Out of its challenge arose the most fruitful debate of the period, a question of perennial interest—the relation of natural and revealed religion. The work of Tindal is really the key of the deistic position. It brought forth, among others, the replies of Conybeare, Foster and Leland; and probably more than any other single attack, induced Butler to enter the field. The argument of Tindal may be briefly stated. He boldly declares that Christianity is identical with the religion of nature. He lays it down as a self-evident proposition that as God is perfect He must have given to man from the first perfect means of knowing and serving Him. But if the law of nature is perfect it admits of no addition, since it is not conceivable that God's relation to His creatures could be at one time more perfect than at another. Hence we must accept the sufficiency of the light of nature, and conclude that Christianity, so far as it is true, simply republishes it. Moreover, the claim of Christianity to be a new and special revelation is discredited by the fact that the alleged revelation was made only to a small portion of the human race, whereas the law of nature has been declared to every man and is perfectly discoverable by reason. "It is absolutely perfect, has the highest internal excellence, the greatest plainness, simplicity, unanimity, universality, antiquity and eternity."

Dr. Conybeare's reply to Tindal, though perhaps an adequate rejoinder to the form in which the argument

was put, partakes of the superficiality and narrowness of vision common to all the writers of the time. It may be a sufficient answer to Tindal to say that the law of nature can only be perfect in a relative sense; and that as regards its sanctions, extent and means of understanding it, there is room for an additional communication on the part of God. Conybeare's vindication of Revelation can hardly be said to rest upon higher grounds than those of his opponent. It is surely a poor way to present Christianity as simply an after-thought of the Deity added to nature so that there might be no misunderstanding or loophole of escape left to the creature. It is not a system artificially tacked on to nature from the outside. It is rather that to which the light of nature points and in which it is fulfilled. The manifestation of God in Christ is nothing if it is not the core and climax of all revelation, without which all other knowledge would be not only partial, but unintelligible and unsatisfying.

The discussion raised by Tindal was carried on by others, such as Chubb and Morgan, but attention was directed to the ethical rather than the theological side of Christianity. This was the attitude of Thomas Chubb, the self-taught glovemaker of Salisbury. He was preceded, however, by a more illustrious writer, Lord Shaftesbury, the pupil and friend of Locke, and the author of the *Characteristics* (first published in 1711). Shaftesbury is usually ranked with the deists, but he did not set himself out to attack the truths of religion, but maintained throughout his life a sympathetic attitude towards Christianity. His interests lay on the ethical side of religion. Too much, he thought, had been made of the sanctions of religion—the rewards and penalties of the Gospel. Virtue is its own reward. Its true ground is not what it will bring, but "the

general admiration and love of it." The question which Shaftesbury sought to answer was the old problem of the Schoolmen, whether a thing was right because God commanded it, or He commanded it because it was right. That there was need for the criticism of Shaftesbury is revealed in the prevailing utilitarianism of the orthodox Church as expounded a little later in Paley's famous definition of virtue—" doing good in obedience to the will of God for the sake of everlasting happiness." Shaftesbury was the originator of a new school of moralists who contended, in opposition to Hobbes, that man is not determined by merely selfish or individual desires, but that there are also inherent in his nature social and altruistic tendencies which are even more powerful in shaping his conduct. It may be that in the study of ethics Shaftesbury and his followers found relief from the somewhat arid contentions of the deists. At all events, in this domain, Hutcheson, Price, Ferguson, and Hume, as well as, to some extent, Clarke and Wollaston, preferred to labour, and it was in this department they produced their most original and durable ideas. " The moral life," says Clarke, " consists in conformity with the fitness of things." He who follows his passions acts contrary to elementary nature ; he not only contradicts the order of the world, but denies the law of his own reason. In like manner, says Wollaston, the reward of moral action is " a life according to nature," and to obey reason is happiness and well-being. This too was the philosophy of Chubb. He is the moralist among the deists. Christianity, he held, was simply a system of ethics. The Gospel may be summed up in teaching men how to live according to the reason of things. In a later work he throws doubt on Christ's divinity, explains away the Gospel miracles,

and even casts discredit on the morality of the New Testament.

III

The writers hitherto named deal generally with the more abstract problem of the relation of Revelation to the light of nature. As time went on the deists became more aggressive, descending from the general to the more particular and concrete aspects of the subject. Two lines of attack were followed; that with reference to the validity of Prophecy, and that in regard to the credibility of Miracles.

The first was taken by Anthony Collins, an Essex squire of independent means and a friend of Locke. Already in 1713 he had gained notoriety by a discourse on Freethinking. There he maintains that thought should be unrestricted. Without liberty there can be no truth. The only crime a man can be charged with in regard to belief is not to think independently. He does not, however, define freedom of thought, but simply attacks somewhat bitterly the received opinions regarding Christianity. The book is chiefly remembered by the reply of Bentley, in which he not only exposes the inaccurate scholarship of Collins, but also caustically remarks that the free-thinker has his prejudices not less than the believer. In 1724 Collins published his *Discourse on the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion.* In this work he subjected to criticism one particular line of evidence for the Messiahship of Jesus —the argument from Prophecy. The literal view he holds to be a blot on present-day belief. The only legitimate way is to concede frankly, as the early Fathers did, that the prophecies of the Old Testament ostensibly referring to our Lord are to be understood allegorically. Collins was one of the ablest writers

on the deistic side ; and though his arguments are not always convincing or wholly free from bias, he was entirely right in claiming the liberty of critically examining this and every other aspect of Revelation, and he deserves to be remembered for this, if for nothing else, that he was one of the earliest in our country to direct attention to the new science of Biblical Criticism.

Of the many answers to his work, the only one Collins deigned to notice was that of Edward Chandler, afterwards bishop of Durham, whose elaborate treatise, *A Defence of Christianity*, published in 1725, covers the whole ground. Collins had no difficulty in demolishing the arguments of the bishop, though he was fair enough to acknowledge the force of some of Chandler's contentions. Few Biblical scholars would now assent to the crass literalism in dealing with prophecy which this defender of the Faith adopts. But the modern student will probably admit that the bishop is on surer ground when he contends that there is enough in the Old Testament as a presage and preparation of the New to accredit Jesus as the expected Messiah, although some of the alleged references may be disputed, and others excluded as not stamped with a sufficient degree of clearness. Valuable as the work of Collins is, it must be admitted that he did not make sufficient allowance for what has been called " The force of convergent evidence as to true fulfilment."

The only writer of this period who lifted the argument to a higher level, with some glimmer of historical perspective, was Sherlock. In his *Use and Intent of Prophecy*, he contended that the primary aim of the prophets was not so much to predict the future as to proclaim God's message to their contemporaries, and

keep alive the spiritual aspirations of their own age. The Old Testament is not a treasure-house of particular predictions bearing on the New. The history of the earlier Dispensation reveals rather a gradual and progressive preparation for a fuller blessing, which attained its fulfilment, not in particular deeds or words, but in that one event to which all Scripture points—the Advent and Life of the Son of Man.

The controversy regarding Prophecy called forth the effort of Thomas Woolston to apply the same principles to the argument from Miracles. The writer in this case, however, lacked every quality which could give to the controversy any real interest. His scurrilous treatment of the subject deprived his work of all importance. It is charitable to believe, as was generally alleged, that he was not in his right mind. He maintained that the miracles were only allegories, or symbolic representations of spiritual truth. His *Discourses* were condemned to be publicly burned, while their author was thrown into prison, where he died in 1731. The sale of his books, however, did not cease, and it is reckoned that more than 30,000 copies were sold. On the Continent his theological views received the attention of German scholars, and Strauss in particular acknowledges his indebtedness to his writings. But though the violent negations of Woolston are of little account in themselves, they have at least the significance of bringing the whole question of the miraculous into prominence, and thereby giving a new turn to the deistic problem. The subject which up to this point had been chiefly discussed was the need of Revelation, but men came to see that this involved the larger question of the meaning and value of the Supernatural as a whole.

This was the question to which Conyers Middleton devoted himself. He professed to be answering Tindal,

Woolston and other deists, but his attacks upon the orthodoxy of Bentley and Waterland revealed his own free-thinking proclivities. In 1748 he published his *Free Enquiry* into the miraculous powers claimed for the post-apostolic church. This book may be regarded as indicating the high-water mark of the deistic controversy. Though it did not settle the conflict, it brought it to a distinct issue. Middleton's distinction rests upon a twofold ground. He boldly concentrates the whole deistic controversy upon the one vital point—the place of the miraculous in the scheme of the world; he is also the earliest writer to introduce the Psychological subjective element as accounting for the growth and decline of the belief in the supernatural. It was natural, he contends, that in primitive times the sense of the miraculous should largely prevail. But with the progress of thought and the more accurate conception of the laws of nature, it was only what might be expected that men would come to feel that the supernatural explanations of the mysteries of life are both unnecessary and improbable.

From this point onwards the deistic controversy began to assume a more radical shape, and its interest began to wane. It will not be necessary to refer at length to the sceptical writers of the period. The greatest of all was David Hume, whose famous essay on miracles centred in the impossibility of ever obtaining sufficient evidence in proof of a break in nature. He, however, repudiated the name of deist, and objected to be classified with infidels. Nor can Gibbon be fairly brought under the designation. His interests were not theological. In his student days he had been converted to Romanism; though, nominally at least, he soon came back to his father's faith. But Christian belief had no great hold on him, and his historical

studies seemed to weaken, if not to extinguish, any religious sympathies he ever held. In his portrayal of the drama of the Roman Empire he was inevitably brought into contact with the origin of Christianity. He does not spare the infirmities of the early Church, and his scarcely veiled sarcasms in some measure impair the otherwise sound impartiality of his great work.

With Bolingbroke Deism may be said to come to an end. He was a thorough-going sceptic. He has been called the Voltaire of English life. But the boisterous humour of the English statesman lacks the delicate irony of the French wit. Though the author of numerous philosophical works he is hardly remembered as a scholar. He was supposed to be inspired by Pope's *Essay on Man*. But Pope had no very high opinion of his philosophical talent. He is said to have brought the habits of the political arena into the domain of speculation. He rails at all writers, and regards every one as a fool or a madman who differs from himself. He hates divines of every persuasion, and decries all religious belief. Fraud lies at the root of most religions, and the doctrines of Christianity were invented by the cunning of priests to exploit for their own ends the ignorance of the simple. With the death of Bolingbroke in 1751 Deism came to a close.

IV

Nor can we linger over the apologists. Some have been already referred to. Even a bare catalogue of names would require pages. To one book of Collins no less than thirty-five answers appeared. All forms of literature were drawn into the strife—essays, sermons, the philosophical treatise, the political pamphlet.

South, the royalist divine; Tillotson, the Platonist; Addison, the litterateur; Swift, the satirist; Bentley, the classic; Clarke, the theologian; Lardner, the Biblicist—all were engaged in the one task of proving the credibility of the Christian faith. The Deists were crushed by the very multitude and weight of their opponents. Even forcible means were not neglected. Church and State, at variance in many things, were united in their desire to root out heresy. Genuine religion was at a low ebb. The common people were vicious and brutal. The immorality and practical infidelity of the age are reflected in the pages of Richardson, Fielding and Smollett. But intolerance not infrequently goes hand in hand with licence. Those who have no scruples for themselves are often keenly sensitive to the moral lapses of others. Free-thinking was the most deadly of sins. It was the epoch of 'church-warden religion.' Dr. Johnson sums up the intellectual activity of the period under what he calls "old Bailey Theology," in which "the apostles were being tried once a week for the capital crime of forgery." The utilitarian prudential character of religion is reflected in the preaching of the times. When Collins was asked why he made his servants go to church, he replied, "I do it that they may neither rob nor murder me." Tillotson's sermon "On the Advantage of Religion to Societies," is but the elaboration of Collins' reply.

But if, what the Germans call "the ethics of consequences" largely dominated the apologetic literature of anti-deism, it was characteristic of the age, that, with the exception of William Law, who placed special revelation so high that it was impossible for reason to compass it; and of Conybeare and Leland, who, in order to make room for revelation, thought it necessary

to deny reason altogether, it was the minimum of the supernatural element for which the apologists as a rule pled.

Joseph Butler, the greatest of the eighteenth century apologists, stands apart from the others, not merely in the aim and scope of his work, but in superiority of speculative power and moral earnestness. Among his contemporaries, Berkeley and Hume alone are his intellectual equals. He held aloof, moreover, from the world of self-seekers, whose vulgar ambitions marred the ecclesiastical life of his generation. If he obtained, eventually, high distinction in the Church, it was without solicitation on his part. The picture of the solitary and somewhat ascetic thinker walking his garden at the midnight hour engaged in high meditation, touches our imagination. He was born in 1692 and died in 1752. His life therefore covers the entire period of Deism, and his literary efforts may be regarded as summing up and completing the protracted discussion. His fame rests upon two works—the *Sermons* and the *Analogy*. The first, published in 1726, constitutes one of the most important contributions to Christian Ethics in our country. The high and sacred function he assigns here to the human conscience colours his whole conception of life and affords a clue to the interpretation of his later treatise. Though the *Analogy* was not published till 1736, just before he became Bishop of Bristol, its main arguments were thought out in the retirement of the 'Golden Rectory' of Stanhope, where, "buried, but not dead," he spent eight years of his early ministry. The book has become a classic of theology, but in its own day it attracted little attention and roused hardly any controversy. The style is heavy and involved, largely due to the author's attempt to pack his thoughts too closely.

While Butler is allowed by common consent to be among the greatest champions of Christianity, he has probably made few actual converts, and possibly, as Pitt is reported to have said, has raised more doubts than he has allayed.[1]

Butler's design was to undermine the position of the deists by showing that the repudiation of Revealed Religion did not relieve them from difficulties, since the anomalies of supernaturalism were not greater than those which beset the religion of nature. The *Analogy* is divided into two parts. In the first, dealing with natural religion, Butler sets himself to show that, assuming the " conclusions of the deists as to the cause and constitution of nature," on the same principles, belief in a future life, in the government of God by rewards and punishments, in a state of probation, may be justified and regarded as highly probable.

From the conclusion thus reached in the first part, the author proceeds, in the second part, to show by analogy that the essential features of Revelation are suggested and even shadowed forth in the ordinary course of nature. The main objections to revelation are threefold ; that it is miraculous,[2] that it involves faith in a Mediator,[3] and that there is only partial and limited knowledge of it.[4] But, says Butler, there is something analogous in the very constitution of nature to these three elements. First, even in the ordinary government of the world fresh methods of divine working, different from the original forth-putting of power in creation, are frequently occurring, and these, in relation to what has gone before, may be considered as miraculous. Secondly, there are not wanting through-

[1] See Gladstone's *Studies Subsidiary to Butler*, p. 137.

[2] *Analogy*, Pt. II., chaps. ii. iii.

[3] *Idem*, Pt. II., chap. v.

[4] *Idem*, Pt. II., chap. iv.

out the whole course of human life instances of vicarious suffering, and even of mediatorial action, equivalent to, or at least typical of the special mediatorial work of Christ. Finally, all knowledge is at best partial, and many of the highest 'goods' of life are limited in extent, possessed at first only by the few, and but gradually extended to all. Thus, the author affirms there are really no greater difficulties in the case of revealed religion than in regard to natural religion. The main purpose of the work is to show that the objections made to revelation are not less applicable to the whole constitution of the natural world, and that the general analogy between the principles of divine government as revealed in Scripture and those manifested in ordinary life, urges us to the conclusion not only that they have one Author, but that the former are as much entitled to our acceptance as the latter.

Two objections have been raised against Butler's mode of argument. First, that it is merely negative; and second, that the conclusion is based only upon probability. It is an endeavour to meet difficulties in one order by asserting equal or greater difficulties in another order. Butler himself is not insensible to this objection, and he labours to remove it. But all he does, is, while acknowledging the general perplexity of "this troublous world," to fall back upon the main principle of the whole book—the moral government of God as revealed to man in the inward witness of the conscience. In the *Analogy* not less distinctly than in the *Sermons*, "the deification of the Conscience," says Leslie Stephen, "is the beginning, middle and end of Butler's preaching." Whatever doubts beset him, he is convinced that the secret of the universe is revealed, if anywhere, through morality. Duty is

his first and last word. It is the one positive element in his teaching. Whatever else is uncertain this is plain. For the rest, he resorts to what has been called "The Law of Probability." This mode of calculation was inherited from the mathematical method of the Cartesian school, and was first affected in our country by Richard Cumberland, the author of *De Legibus Naturae*, to whom both Butler and Paley were largely indebted.[1] At the most Butler has only shown that Christianity is credible. The weight of probability is largely in its favour; and if so, it would be only wise to act upon the supposition.[2] No harm would result if the assumption should prove mistaken; whereas, if it be true, and we omit to act upon its truth, the consequences would be serious. One cannot but feel that this prudential style of argument fails to strike an elevating and inspiring note, and is more apt to induce scepticism than conviction.

Butler has been frequently compared with Pascal. In literary effect and logical force the French writer excels the English divine. But there is an element of similarity. Both are perplexed with the confusion of the world. But while Pascal at times seems to yield to overmastering hopelessness, Butler reveals the manlier spirit and bravely tries to extract from doubt itself an argument for faith.

As an answer to Deism the *Analogy* is not without force; as a complete apology for Christianity it is not wholly convincing. Yet when all deductions have been made the book must be reckoned as one of the abiding landmarks of English religious history. It is

[1] Particularly chaps. ii. and iii. of *Analogy*, drawn from Cumberland. Cf. Hallam, *Literary History*, vol. iv. p. 159. 166.

[2] See Leslie Stephen, *op. cit. in loco.* But see Mr. Gladstone's reply to Stephen, p. 46 ff, and his *Essay on Probability*, chap. x., p. 335 ff, *op. cit.*

impossible to read these chapters, packed with serious and subtle thinking, without being conscious that one is in contact with a mind profoundly earnest and of fine penetration, which has set itself reverently and dispassionately to grapple with the problems of man's destiny and find their solution, as one has said, "in the voice of conscience as the revelation of the unwritten and eternal laws graven on the fleshy tablets of man's heart." [1] With his profound feeling of the immeasurable world, his steady gaze into the abysmal mysteries which underlie human life, and above all, his unswerving resolve to say neither more nor less than he knew, Bishop Butler stands out as the sole heroic figure in the somewhat motley crowd of British apologists.

V

The fundamental objection which must be taken to the conception of Christianity as presented by Butler is that which applies to the entire deistic scheme of religion. What we see in the theology of the eighteenth century is the old duality of subject and object which, as a relic of Scholasticism, reappears in so many subsequent periods. The old Mediæval distinction between reason and faith, nature and revelation, as two separate sources of knowledge, is repeated. Natural religion is identified with the moral life, with the additional adherence to certain dogmas of Philosophy, such as the existence of God and the immortality of the soul; while Revealed Religion is viewed simply as a somewhat superfluous, and not very intelligible 'ab extra' interference with the established order of things. Such was the deistic conception of God and

[1] W. S. Lilly, *Chapters in European History*, vol. iv. p. 183.

His relation to the world. But the deist did not perceive that by thus separating God from the world he was really making the Deity a finite Being, and setting up along side of Him a sphere in which His relations are arbitrary and occasional. This external and otiose Deity comes to be regarded by philosophy as more or less "an ornamental appendage to the scheme of things."

This false dualism, best illustrated in Paley's mechanical theory of design, vitiates the entire religious thought of the *Enlightenment.* It is not surprising that in England, notwithstanding an abundance of evidential literature, God became little more than a name, and religion a form of words. Christian doctrine became almost extinct in the churches, and it was a matter of uncertainty what Christianity really stood for. In France and Germany, to which countries this shallow rationalism eventually spread, the natural result was widely diffused scepticism. Voltaire, Diderot and D'Holbach were not slow to draw their own inferences and carry to their ultimate consequences the philosophy of Locke and Hume on the one hand, and the more practical implications of Tindal and Woolston on the other.

The position occupied by the most profound thinkers of the nineteenth century owes something, however, to the labours of the deists. Their work was largely negative and destructive, but it had to be done, if a more constructive effort for the building up of religious thought was to be undertaken. The deists rejected what they called 'Revealed Religion,' in the interests of what they believed to be the function of reason and the domain of natural law. But they failed to see that Christianity, not less than nature, is also the manifestation of Reason; and that without what is

specially designated Revelation, natural religion itself would be meaningless and irrational. How to unite the truths which Deism had divorced, to bring Revelation within the sphere of law and lift up law to the level of divine revelation; how in short, to combine the Transcendence of God with the Immanence of God, and show that all nature and life are dominated and pervaded by one Divine Spirit, is the problem which the eighteenth century has bequeathed to modern thought. As long as the opposing elements—God and the World—are regarded as external to one another, they can only be held together by a perpetual compromise which hides, but does not get rid of, the duality. The fundamental fallacy is that revealed religion is assumed to be exclusive of reason; and Christianity, instead of being taken as the key to the mysteries of nature and life, is treated as tidings from some far-distant and strange world which has no point of contact with mundane conditions. But the idea of a Divine Humanity as the central fact of history involves the idea that man has within him a divine principle enabling him to respond to the supreme revelation of God, in relation to which all things must be ultimately explained. A true Christian Philosophy must not be a thing tacked on from without to a system of natural theology. It must be central and integral. What the eighteenth century did not see was that if Christ be the supreme Fact of history, then that fact must be treated, not as something external and foreign to the mind of man, but as the vital and all-pervading principle of his life.

CHAPTER VI

PHASES OF PIETISM

It has been observed by the biographer of Wesley,[1] that Voltaire and the father of Methodism were of the same generation and their lives contemporaneous, while the influence they exerted was not less remarkably opposed. The inference is that in the Economy of Providence the bane and the antidote appear simultaneously; and wherever the poisonous streams of error flow there too spring up the trees of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. Not seldom indeed in history has religious warmth been evoked by a recoil from the coldness of rationalism and an epoch of pietistic fervour following upon an age of lethargy, has not only counteracted the immediate effects of decadence, but influenced for good the after course of religious thought. Remarkable as was the Evangelical Awakening inaugurated by Wesley in England, it was not an isolated phenomenon. A similar movement, produced by similar causes, sprang up in various places about the same time and spread throughout Europe. Methodism in England had its equivalent in the Mysticism of Spain and Holland, in the 'Quietism' of France and the Pietism of Germany.

[1] Southey, whose life of Wesley has not been superseded, and remains a classic of biographical literature.

These various manifestations are types of a general spiritual reaction which affected all countries. The primary aim in every instance, though not always clearly defined, was to confront the deeper questions of religion with new spiritual energy, and to create forms of faith and utterance which would more adequately express the emotions of the soul. In this Chapter it is proposed to glance briefly at some of the more positive phases of the Pietistic movement, which during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries spread throughout Europe, and must be reckoned as contributory factors in shaping modern thought.

I

Pietism took its rise among the Calvinists of the Netherlands, where the stirring political events at the close of the sixteenth century had intensified religious controversy. It passed thence to the contiguous parts of Germany through the agency of home-returning students, who had been attracted by the fame of Dutch scholars. Among these teachers, Gilbert Voet, professor of theology in Utrecht from 1634 to 1676, is prominent. He has been called the 'patron of conventicles,' and was the originator of private meetings for spiritual culture, which became a feature of the movement. The learned theologian, Cocceius of Leyden, was associated with Voet in his efforts to stem the tide of secularism. "Life," he said, "is more important than doctrine, and the test of religion is not correctness of opinion but consistency of conduct." At the same time he attached considerable importance to a philosophic grasp of the principles which lie at the root of the religious life, and he espoused the tenets of Descartes, whose philosophy had already begun to

affect theological speculation. As contrasted with the later German type, Dutch Pietism revealed a strong intellectual strain, largely due to the teachings of Descartes and Spinoza. Though Descartes was reared in the bosom of the Romish Church, his vindication of the independence of the intellect and conscience of man exerted a peculiar fascination upon Protestant thinkers. Not less attractive for the Pietistic mind were the mystical elements of Spinoza's teaching. The "Amor intellectualis" of Spinoza and the "Laetitia Spiritualis" of Pietism were akin. Both represented the spirit of cheerful tranquillity begotten of complete union with God. While not an actual convert to Christianity, the Jewish philosopher had much sympathy with the position of the "Remonstrants"; and after his excommunication from the synagogue, he found an asylum among the Pietists of Holland. The Mystical Pantheism as the basis of a spiritual view of the world, together with the intellectual love of God, into which the human will is taken up, as expounded by Spinoza, made a strong appeal to the contemplative thinkers of Holland of this period, and has contributed elements to the new development of Mysticism in recent times.

II

The Pietism of the Lutheran Church, as might be expected from its more subjective standpoint, unlike the Dutch product, was emotional rather than intellectual in its character. While the Calvinists of Holland found support in the philosophy of Spinoza, German Evangelicalism drew its inspiration rather from the theosophic Mysticism of Jacob Boehme. The Görlitz shoemaker was a humble God-fearing man,

a faithful Lutheran, but of bold, speculative mind. His chief work, *Aurora*, a medley of dark utterances and somewhat incoherent yearnings, describes the dawn of the author's religious consciousness. He sees in God the harmony of all contradiction and the ground of all reality. Life is a striving after unity, a conflict between light and darkness, good and evil, which can only attain its end in the triumph of God. Schelling and Hegel owe much to Boehme; and Law, Coleridge, and some of our later poets have been considerably influenced by his teaching.[1] The importance of Jacob Boehme has not been fully recognised. He is the founder of Modern Mysticism, and the true father of modern philosophy. "He is known," says Hegel, "as the 'Philosophus Teutonicus,' and in reality through him for the first time did philosophy in Germany come forward with a characteristic stamp."[2] There are two traits, mainly characteristic, of his speculations—*Spiritualism*, posited as a fundamental truth; and *Realism*, founded on the faith of experience. And it is the endeavour to reconcile the reality of the objects of Experience with the supremacy of Spirit which is at once Boehme's task and the problem of all the after-types of Philosophy[3]—the synthesis of Idealism and Realism.

Prominent in this school of contemplative Pietism stands Johann Arndt, who has been called by some another Tauler, and likened by others in his Puritanic fervour to Baxter and even to Bunyan. His *True Christianity*, published in 1605, is still a classic in Germany. It makes war against all merely verbal

[1] See Underhill, *The Mystic Way*, and also Von Hügel, *The Eternal Life*.

[2] Hegel, *Geschichte der Phil.*, iii. p. 300.

[3] See, a fine estimate of Jacob Boehme in *Historical Studies in Philosophy*, by Emile Boutroux.

professors of faith—" Maul-Christen," as Arndt calls them. When taunted with being a mystic, Arndt retorted that " if a man is thirsty he will go rather to a troubled spring than a dry well."

But undoubtedly the master-spirit of the movement was Philip Jacob Spener,[1] born in Alsace 1635. As a preacher he made a profound sensation, drawing men from the clamour of theological debate to meditation upon the distinctive elements of the Christian life. He occupied leading positions in Strassburg, Frankfort, Leipzig and Dresden ; and in Berlin, to which he was called in 1691, he became the provost of the University, and indeed the foremost divine of his day in Germany. His energies were directed to the revival of religion, and the restoration of the Lutheran Church to its original simplicity of faith. He made no direct attack on the theology of his time. His interests were practical rather than doctrinal. By Bible study, educational methods and the fostering of a devotional spirit, it was his aim to quicken the religious life and raise the moral tone of the people. He established " Erbauungs-Stunden," or classes for edification and devotion, in which the laity were invited to take part. His influence, however, was chiefly felt among the students, especially the candidates for the ministry, whom he desired to make apt preachers of the Word rather than learned scholars. He published sixty-three volumes, but with the exception of the *Pia Desideria*, or *Pious Wishes*, in which he has given an account of his aims and aspirations, most of his books are now forgotten.

[1] The chief authority for German Pietism is *Geschichte des Pietismus*, by Ritschl. But an interesting account may be found in Pusey's early and now rare work, *An Historical Inquiry into the Probable Causes of the Rationalistic character lately predominant in the Theology of Germany*, 1828.

The Pietism of Spener was mediæval in its outlook upon life. Though his teaching tended to vitalize belief it lacked originality. The traditional views of human depravity and salvation as an escape from an evil world, the duty of withdrawal from the secular interests and enjoyments of life, the need of constant self-examination and the possibility of attaining perfection in this world, are the recurring topics of his discourses. The bias of his teaching was towards exclusiveness and individualism. Though he himself did not forsake the Lutheran Communion the tendency of his efforts was to create ' a Church within a Church,' and to foster a spirit of self-satisfied isolation in those who believed they were in possession of special grace.

Hardly less prominent, and even more energetic in works of reform and charity, was August Franke, the coadjutor and successor of Spener. As preacher, professor and philanthropist, he shed lustre on the Evangelical Cause in Germany. In early life he had undergone a severe spiritual struggle with doubt, but had emerged victorious ; and as a result of his personal experience he attached great importance to early decision and youthful conversions. His practical charity was shown in his labours among the poor, and especially in founding the first orphan-home in Halle, which he started with the scanty capital of seven guldens (about £1). Along with Spener and Thomasius of Leipzig, Franke was instrumental in instituting in 1694 the University of Halle, which under his care became the chief centre of Pietism. In the first year of its existence over 6,000 students were trained and sent forth throughout the land as bearers of the evangelical message.

In spite of attacks, both of the orthodox Lutherans and the progressive rationalists, " the Halle School

of Piety " became a great spiritual power in Germany. Its professors bore the hallmark of the movement, and students flocked from every part of the country, and even from foreign lands, eager to catch the inspirations of the new Evangel. Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia gave orders in 1729 that no minister should be ordained to a charge in the kingdom unless he had studied for at least two years in Halle, and held a certificate of being in a state of grace. Pietists, in the guise of pedlars, travelled from place to place, more anxious to inculcate their beliefs than to sell their wares. In every class of society, from the nobles of the castle to the peasants of the village the " Stillen im Lande " were to be found. The movement became in time infected with much extravagance. Bigotry, narrowness, and spiritual pride were prevalent ; and at last even the gentle Spener had to confess with shame that " his friends did him more harm than his enemies."

It was inevitable that a reaction should set in. The emotional side had been unduly cultivated to the neglect of the intellectual. The ferment of new ideas, political, social and scientific, which marked the opening of the eighteenth century, and was already working in France and England, was also beginning to infect Germany. The teaching of the English Deists and the French Philosophers had reached the German schools of learning. The philosophical and scientific speculations of Leibnitz and Newton, as well as the teachings of Voltaire and Rousseau, were spreading throughout every country and creating new problems for religious faith.

Christian Wolff, Professor of Philosophy in Halle, an ardent disciple of Leibnitz, sought to apply the philosophy of his master to religion, and demonstrate

the doctrines of Christianity by mathematical reasoning. The chief hindrance to religious certainty was, according to this teacher, "confusion"; the one remedy, "victorious analysis." He had a profound belief in proof by dissection, in bringing all truth to the test of the formal logic of the understanding. This being his general view of things and the method of his teaching, it is not surprising that he came under the suspicion of the Evangelicals of the university circle, and an effort was set on foot to get the obnoxious professor expelled from his chair. There were some grounds for their alarm, though their mode of procedure was inexcusable. Many of the clergy had begun to adopt the Wolffian philosophy, and pulpits that formerly proclaimed the simple unadulterated Gospel were occupied by men who mystified their congregations by cold, logical disquisitions upon "Pre-established Harmony" and the "theory of Monads." Wolff was cast out of the orthodox Halle. But it is a curious commentary on the spirit of the times that after a few years he was recalled and welcomed with acclamation, and the quondam stronghold of Pietism became the seat of the most pronounced rationalism.

The new philosophy was in the ascendancy. Wolff and his School were succeeded in the domain of theology by the shallow rationalism of men like Semler and Paulus, who sought to explain away supernatural events in the Gospel records by the theory of "accommodation." The writings of Voltaire and De Mettrie, as well as those of Tindal and Chubb, became the vogue in the universities of Germany. Frederick the Great posed as the friend of toleration, and proclaimed that every man must go to Heaven in his own way, but at the same time he very much doubted if there was any Heaven to go to.

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Pietism owed much to the personality of its founders, and with the death of Spener and Franke, its unity was broken. With the exception of Zinzendorf, the leader of the Moravians, and Bengel, the scholarly and saintly commentator, there were few who carried on the traditions of the once powerful influence. For the most part Pietism in Germany degenerated into effeminate Sentimentalism. What remained of vitality in the movement was largely incorporated with the Moravian Community, which in 1722 found an asylum in Herrnhŭt. The Moravian Society had no little share in creating the great Methodist Movement to which all English-speaking communities owe so much. And somewhat later, Schleiermacher, the Father of Modern German Theology, which arose as a protest against the Rationalistic School, was reared in a Moravian home and educated in a Moravian School, and owed to evangelical influences the spiritual warmth and emotional intensity which characterise his teaching.

III

Owing to a number of powerful counter-forces, Pietism in France, while it found expression in a few isolated individuals of rare beauty and elevation of soul, was sporadic and occasional, and hardly attained to that unity of sentiment and aim which entitled it to the name of a ' movement ' or ' school.'

One of the most interesting manifestations of French religious life takes its name from Jansen, originally a Dutch divine whose Evangelical leanings brought him into conflict with his Catholic masters. Jansen, and those who sympathised with him, the Modernists of their day, contended for more liberty in the inter-

pretation of divine truth, and laid stress upon the necessity of immediate and personal communion with God. Repelled though he was by the strict and formal rules of the Jesuit order, he had no sympathy with Protestant teaching. What he sought was a theology which should be Catholic but not Jesuitical; Evangelical but not Protestant. This he professed to find in the Mystical doctrine of Augustine. The chief feature of Jansenism was its insistence upon the belief that piety is a thing of the heart and not of the understanding. It is wholly an effect of divine grace, and consists in a subjective experience whose inward witness is the Holy Spirit. Among the most interesting converts to Jansenism were Angélique Arnauld, the Abbess of Port Royal, near Versailles, and her brother Antoine, a professor of theology at the Sorbonne, whom his sister was the means of converting. His book on *Frequent Communion* raised a violent storm which was the cause of his expulsion from his chair, notwithstanding Pascal's attempt embodied in the famous *Provincial Letters*, to save him.[1]

Jansenism declined into a controversial discussion, but it brought into prominence two great figures of French Catholicism, Bossuet and Pascal, who have left the impress of their personality upon religious philosophy, and are to be reckoned as among the dominant forces of European thought. Both men used their talents in seeking to harmonise faith and reason, and to discover a point of reconciliation among the diverse factions of Christendom.

One other form of Mysticism which arose as a protest against the prevalent externalism of religion, also deserves notice. The chief features of this phase of

[1] See an interesting account of the movement in Principal Tulloch's *Pascal*. Foreign Classic Series, 1878.

piety, which has received the name of 'Quietism,' was the voluntary withdrawal from the interests of the world and the entire surrender of the self to God. Molinos, a monk of Spanish extraction, the author of a once famous book, *Guide Spirituale*, and Madame Guyon, the writer of many beautiful hymns, were among the leaders of this movement. But the most notable product of French Quietism, who stands out as one of the most spiritual writers of the seventeenth century, was Fénelon, a man of rare thought and generous sympathy. While espousing a contemplative life, he strongly repudiated the antinomian consequences which were usually associated with it. With a fine chivalry he championed the cause of Molinos and Madame Guyon, though not sharing their views, simply because of what he regarded as the injustice of their treatment. Fénelon long enjoyed the friendship of Bossuet, an intimacy only broken at last by Bossuet's bitter attack upon Quietism. His own ideas of detachment from the world—"renonciation douce et totale"—Fénelon has finely uttered: "Tout passe devant mes yeux, mais rien ne m'importe: rien n'est mon affaire sinon l'affaire unique de faire la volonté de Dieu."

IV

The Evangelical awakening in England was a later manifestation than those we have just mentioned, and was to some extent instigated by the earlier religious revival in Germany. What Spener was to the Lutheran Church, Wesley became in England. But while the Evangelical movement only came to a head in the second half of the eighteenth century, it had its origin in certain mystical tendencies of the previous

age. George Fox, the protagonist of the 'Society of Friends,' and William Law, the non-juror, stand out as the pioneers of English Pietism. But they were not alone. It has been usual, as Leslie Stephen reminds us, to denounce the formality of the eighteenth century. But if there is evidence enough to show that many of the clergy were worldly and time-serving, the condemnation is too sweeping. In the early portion of the century at least, there were many English divines whose devotion has not been surpassed in any period of English history. Bishop Butler and Bishop Berkeley have already been mentioned, who were not more distinguished in literature than in grace of character. To these must be added Wilson, representing the best type of Anglican, and on the dissenting side Lardner, Watts, Doddridge—men of profound faith and high probity of life.

But though Wesley was not the first or only man to make a stand against the formalism of the age, the movement associated with his name, gathering up and focusing the earlier impulses, is the most important religious phenomenon of the century. Of the writers who are said to have influenced the life of Wesley—Thomas à Kempis, Jeremy Taylor and William Law—the last, though not the greatest, was probably the one who most affected his early outlook and gave to his life-work its special bent. Law was a man of extraordinary power and originality of thought. That he was able to win the esteem of two such diverse personalities as Gibbon and Wesley indicates the breadth and sympathy of his mind, not less than the probity of his nature. "In our family," says the historian of Rome, "he left the reputation of a worthy and pious man who believed all he professed and practised all he enjoined." There was a strain of mysticism

in Law from the earliest. But in his later years, under the influence of Jacob Boehme, it became more pronounced. Apart from his connection with Wesley it is this element of his teaching which makes his an important name in theology. In his later phases of thought he strikingly anticipates the teaching which traces its origin to Coleridge, and has affinity with the higher idealism of Germany.[1]

Methodism did not take its rise in any doctrinal or ecclesiastical dispute. It was from the beginning a purely religious, and indeed a personal manifestation. Mr. Buckle describes Wesley as "a great schismatic," whose aim was "to organise a system capable of rivalling the Established Church of England." Nothing could be further from the truth or more foreign to the intention of its founder. Wesley was an ordained clergyman and loyal son of the Church, and faithful to her communion until his death. He had what Matthew Arnold calls "a genius for Godliness," and to reform the nation as well as the Church and spread piety over the land was the one object which Wesley set before him. The immediate impulse to his life-work was due to an experience to which Wesley refers as his conversion. The passage in his Journal describing the incident has been often quoted. On returning from Georgia, whither he had gone on a missionary expedition, he sought out a Moravian friend to whom he confided certain religious doubts that were troubling him. His conversation with this man seemed to him "like a revelation," and it prepared the way for what must be regarded as the birth hour of Methodism. He marks the date in his Journal—24th May, 1738—all

[1] Principal Alexander White has done something to revive our interest in William Law, an English thinker, who has been strangely neglected.

unconscious of its issues. On the evening of that day, somewhat reluctantly he went to a meeting of the Moravian Society. As he entered the room in the fading light, some one was reading Luther's Preface to the "Romans." The words of the Reformer sank into his soul; and as the May twilight was deepening into night, the dawn of a great revival shone in Wesley's heart.

This experience was the consecrating touch which made him from that hour the unswerving apostle of the Lord. Already Whitefield, and his own brother Charles, with a small band of like-minded college friends, were engaged in Evangelistic work. It was difficult at first, for the refined Oxford Scholar and High Church English clergyman to overcome his prejudices and join the street preachers. But he felt he had a message to deliver, and soon on the highway and in the field, over the length and breadth of the land, like Whitefield and his brethren, he was proclaiming the Gospel.

The movement was greatly furthered by the diversity of character and gift of its promoters. Charles Wesley was the 'sweet singer,' whose hymns and spiritual songs expressed the faith, while they controlled the passions, of the revivalists; Whitefield was the eloquent preacher, whose words searched the hearts of the common people; and John Wesley, though he shared the gifts of the others, was specially distinguished by his rare capacity for administration, having, as Macaulay says, "a genius for government not inferior to that of Richelieu." He possessed, moreover, qualities which the others lacked; not only was he a man of learning and literary skill, but he was endowed also with remarkable physical vigour and power of endurance. Older than his colleagues, he outlived them all. His

life, indeed, coincided with the century, and Methodism had become, under his personal superintendence, a great and powerful institution, when death in his eighty-eighth year withdrew him from his labours.

He was an indefatigable worker—often in the saddle ten hours on a stretch, reading, and even writing as he rode; and almost till the day of his death preaching on an average twenty sermons a week. It is estimated that he travelled 250,000 miles in his lifetime, and delivered 40,000 discourses. Like Whitefield he selected the poorest working districts as the scene of his activities, and his converts were mostly colliers from the mining villages, artisans and weavers from the towns, and labourers on the land. Of Wesley's preaching, not less than of Whitefield's, when he addressed the miners of Bristol, it could be said, "the tears made white channels down their blackened cheeks." Women fell down in convulsions, and strong men fainted or burst into frenzied cries. At first Wesley welcomed this ferment of emotion as a token of the presence of the Spirit, but afterwards he sought to discourage all such unnatural ebullition of feeling. Wesley was a man of strangely complex character—a mixture of simplicity and shrewdness, uniting strong practical sagacity with almost childish superstition. He lived in a world of supernatural interposition, and he saw the immediate hand of God in every circumstance of life. It was a miracle if the rain ceased and allowed him to proceed on his journey. If a thunderstorm burst upon a town that had refused his message it was a direct judgment from Heaven.

But with these extravagances Wesley combined a robust manhood and well-balanced sanity. His mind was essentially practical, and the great organization of which he was the creator and controller, bears

witness to his remarkable judgment and insight. He was the head and soul of the movement. Nothing happened beyond his ken. It was he who ordained preachers, instituted 'classes,' devised means of support and extension, and in general, consolidated the entire body into a strong and compact organisation which, even in his day, counted its members by millions. "The world is my parish," he said; and now, after a century and a half of existence, Methodism has compassed the globe and more than twenty million souls over the whole earth call Wesley their Spiritual Father.

The Creed of Methodism was from the first extremely simple, and different in nothing from the orthodox belief of the times. Wesley professed the doctrines of the English Church. But he was an eclectic drawing from all sources,—from À Kempis and Calvin, Luther and William Law. The secret of his power lay, not in the novelty of his teaching, but in the new life he poured into the old verities. The old apostolic precept, 'Repent and Believe,' was the central truth of his appeal. At the basis of his religious system lay the doctrine of human depravity. "The fall of man," he says, "is the very foundation of Revealed Religion." Hence follows the need of divine Redemption. But Redemption involves the distinctive Gospel truth—forgotten in Wesley's age—the atoning work of Christ. Wesley was among the earliest of the Moderns to rouse the cry, "back to Christ." He never wearies reiterating the saving power of the Redeemer's Sacrifice, though he makes no attempt to explain the Mystery of the Cross. Not less emphatically does he insist upon the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit, which, he maintains, operates not merely at the beginning, but throughout the whole course, of the Christian life.

Salvation, he tells his hearers, is not deliverance from future Hell, or entrance into some promised Heaven. It is a present rescue from the grip of sin and the immediate restoration of the soul to divine purity. Hence we find that Wesley inclined at times to the Pietistic doctrine of Perfectionism, believing that holiness is instantaneously attainable by the believer. He was not, however, always careful to maintain consistency of doctrine. And if at first he tended to Perfectionist ideas, more frequently he represented life as a probation, a growing in grace, adopting the Arminian position, as against the Calvinist, that Salvation must be worked out by a man's own determination and will, and that Communion with God " is a state of fellowship to which every believer may attain."

It was natural that the Evangelical School should make much of faith, and on this subject, Wesley appears at his best and has made a real contribution to the psychology of the soul. Here he anticipates much of the teaching of the modern exponents of Christian experience. " What is faith ? " asks Wesley. " Not an opinion, nor any number of opinions put together, be they ever so true. It is the vision of the soul, the power by which spiritual things are apprehended, just as material things are ascertained by the physical senses." It is an intuition, truer and more certain in its discoveries than the intellect. " It is," he says, " a spiritual discernment." " It is the eye of the soul whereby the believer sees Him who is invisible." But it is not wholly human ; it is also divine, " a perpetual revelation . . . passing directly from God into the believing Soul." Bergson might claim Wesley as a witness to his philosophy of intuition ; and if the French philosopher were to deign

to treat of the "Varieties of Christian Experience," like another William James, he might be constrained to follow in the wake of the Methodist preacher.

One might have expected that this view of faith as a spiritual faculty or power to discern the truth, stronger and less erring than intellect—almost equivalent to the 'inner light' of the mystics—would have disposed Wesley and his followers to slight the authority of Scripture. But that was not the case. The Wesleyans exalted the Bible, reverencing indeed every letter of it, and carrying their devotion even to the extent of attaching magical significance to the outward form of the book itself.

But with all his respect for doctrine, and in spite of the mystical note we detect at times, Wesley's interests were practical and ethical. Dogma was but a means to life; and if he laid stress on the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit and man's inability, his main emphasis was on the necessity of individual effort. On this account, probably, even more than because of its severely logical and intellectual character, Calvinism revolted him. Only on an Arminian basis, as his robust common sense assured him, could he preach repentance and combat the spirit of fatalism and apathy which, he felt, was inseparable from the Calvinistic doctrine of Divine Absolutism and Election. Wesley's strong Arminian leanings brought him into conflict with the most conspicuous champions of the Predestinarian principle, more especially with the brothers Richard and Rowland Hill, and Toplady; and, what was more serious, led to open and bitter rupture with his earlier fellow-worker, Whitefield. Wesley, who had a sharp tongue and a not less incisive pen, offended his opponents and friends alike by his trenchant criticism of what he called "their monstrous

dogma." "The sum of the whole thing," he says, in answer to Toplady's treatise on "Absolute Predestination," is "the elect shall be saved do what they will; the reprobate shall be damned do what they can. Reader, believe this, or be damned."

Wesley shows himself here as generally to be little of a theologian. No attempt is made to estimate the meaning of the doctrines he condemned, from within, and not Calvinists only, but many of those who sympathised with his views, were shocked at the violence of his language. It is pleasing to note that the breach with Whitefield was at least partially healed, and that on the death of his old friend, Wesley preached the funeral sermon, and bore eloquent testimony to the beauty of his coadjutor's life and the blessings which flowed from his labours. Even more interesting it is to observe that these two men, Whitefield and Wesley, though differing so radically in nature and gifts, standing at the opposite poles of theological doctrine, equally achieved great practical results. Whatever may be said of the relative merits of Calvinism and Arminianism, both have produced good men, and both have been used of God, in the unfolding of truth. The difference is on the surface,—a matter of accent. Beneath is the unity of faith—faith which worketh by love.

The immediate effects of Methodism were visible within the Established Church itself. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there sprang up a band of Evangelicals, who, though working in different centres of the country, had their headquarters in London, and were chiefly known as the "Clapham Sect" [1] Though not a numerous body, and though much disparaged

[1] The name was first given by Sydney Smith to the Evangelical party.

by the majority of the clergy, it included some notable men who contributed not a little to the vitality of religion in England. Foremost among these was John Newton, the vicar of Olney, and the friend of Cowper. He was, he tells us, in early life a notorious sinner and an eminent penitent. He became a still more eminent saint and preacher of righteousness. Few ministers of the Gospel occupied a more conspicuous station or exercised a more extensive influence. Himself the spiritual child of Whitefield, he was the spiritual progenitor of William Wilberforce, the great reformer.

In the village of Clapham, now a part of London, there met in conclave to discuss the high things of God, such men as Henry Thornton and William Wilberforce, Zachary Macaulay, the father of the historian, James Stephen and John Venn, son of Henry Venn, the vicar of Clapham.[1] These were the spiritual sons of Methodism. But while they held the same creed as their predecessors, and with not less sincerity, they were more tolerant of the opinions of others and less blunt in their contentions. A larger knowledge of the world and a finer sense of the social proprieties, had softened their nature and broadened their outlook without compromising their fervour. Nor was their religion confined to words. They were practical evangelicals. The efforts of Granville Sharpe, Thomas Clarkson, Zachary Macaulay, and above all, of William Wilberforce, for the enfranchisement of the slave-born, were typical of the active philanthropy of the entire group. Few men more nobly fulfilled the idea of the stewardship of life than Wilberforce. For nearly fifty years, in Parliament and private life, against the apathy of

[1] See Sir James Stephen *Essays in Eccles. Biography.* Also Ryle, *Christian Leaders of the Last Century*, and references in Thackeray's *Newcomes.*

the Church and the cupidity of commerce, he pled for the oppressed and championed every cause of right and liberty—"Consuming his existence," as it has been finely said, "in labours for the Church, for the State and for mankind, such as no other man in that age, and even no private man in any age of his country's annals, had at once the genius and the will to render." [1]

Of the Spiritual movement, the phases of which have been here reviewed, various estimates have been formed. Some writers speak of Pietism in Germany in exaggerated terms of praise, regarding it as nothing less than a second Reformation. Others are disposed to minimise its value, seeing in it only a temporary outburst of misguided emotion, which, so far as it exercised any appreciable influence, tended to frustrate rather than farther Reformation principles. Dorner, a theologian of the Mediating School, extols Spener's work as a necessary stage in the evolution of Protestant life, and as a genuine product of the Reformation faith.[2] Kahnis,[3] a High Lutheran, reproaches the leaders of Pietism with going beyond the foundations of the Protestant Confession and really retarding the true development of the Church. Ritschl [4] has expressed a similar view. Pietism, he contends, was a falling away from the Reformation position. In its insistence upon personal reform it alienated piety from its source, and divorced faith and conduct. The Church of Luther, he assures us, emphatically presents

[1] Sir James Stephen in *op. cit.* p. 522.

[2] *History of Protestant Theology*, vol. ii. pp. 208-218. See also *Uber den Pietismus, sein Verhältniss zur Kirche*, 1840. pp. 137ff.

[3] *History of German Protestantism.* Eng. trans. p. 99.

[4] *Gesch. d. Pietismus.*

goodness, not as an independent and self-produced attainment, but as the immediate and necessary fruit alone of a justifying faith.

Probably the truth lies somewhere between these contrasted judgments. Evangelicalism can hardly be credited with all the merits its admirers attribute to it. Its weakness, and this applies to the English not less than the German type, lay in its disparagement of the intellect in dealing with the problems of theology and its undue emphasis upon the emotional and subjective side of religion. It tended to separate spiritual experience from the other interests of man, leaving large fields of thought and activity beyond its horizon. It regarded with indifference, and even with hostility, all human effort in the realms of literature, art and science, as tending to corrupt the simplicity of faith. Its crass literalism in Biblical interpretation, its mediæval view of the world and its static theory of life ; above all, its exclusive pride and proneness to create separate bodies outside the jurisdiction of the Church ; were blemishes upon its operations which alienated many who were otherwise in sympathy with the spiritual ends for which it stood. The fullness of life is undoubtedly impaired by those who seek to cultivate the Christian life solely in coteries and cliques ; and detriment is done to the conception of Divine Revelation by those whose spiritual concern is directed wholly inwards, and whose ideal is the sanctification of the soul rather than the consecration of the entire man in all his faculties and activities.

Pietism in all its varieties has no philosophy of history and lacks the sense of historical development. It is purely individualistic. The social aspects of religion are neglected. Each separate soul is represented as making a solitary pilgrimage, and is left to find its way

alone without the supports and inspirations of organised society. This present life is treated too much as a mere preparation for another. "To be happy in another life," says Isaac Milner, "to square all our conduct by that object steadily and primarily kept in view; to attend to the things of this life only as necessary, not as objects of choice—these are the grand objects in the religion of Jesus." [1]

But on the other hand a great work was done by Evangelicalism, and its influence on modern life cannot be ignored. Newman charged Protestantism with its inability to state clearly its position. That cannot be said of the Evangelical party. It may be that they laid too little stress upon the Church as a visible and organised institution. Questions of ecclesiastical government, of apostolic succession and priestly prerogative bulked but small in their minds; but they concentrated attention upon the vital things, and maintained some definite and distinctive doctrines which, though partially softened down in the present day, have exerted, and still continue to exert, considerable power in shaping the views of Christian people. The first is the place which Christ's person, and especially His work, held in their regard. The power and prevalence of sin was a very real thing to them, and not to be toned down, and a remedy mightier than man can devise was seen to be necessary to cope with the disastrous effects of evil in the world. If there is a Gospel of hope for the world at all this must be the burden of it, and the best thought of our day is centring again in the meaning of Christ as the Redeemer of Mankind. Though many of the harsher and narrower aspects of Evangelicalism have yielded to a more liberal inter-

[1] *Sermons*, vol. ii. p. 260, quoted by Storr, *Development of English Theology*, p. 71.

pretation of Christianity, the teaching of Wesley and his successors did a work for their own age and ours which is bearing fruit in the higher thought of to-day. The shallow rationalism of Deism has been discredited, Biblical facts and heart-experiences, which an indifferent and ignorant age was forgetting, have been rediscovered. A new significance has been given to the value of the individual, not indeed in its isolation, but as a part of the great social organism. The appeal to the feelings of man, the challenge of the Gospel to the heart and will, has shown us that the intellect alone is not the sole judge and criterion of truth. Moreover, as a practical force in the world's regeneration, Evangelicalism, in the ardour of its faith and sacrifice, can show a record of heroic missionary enterprise, to which cold intellectual and academic theorists cannot aspire.

II

CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS

CHAPTER VII

THE INFLUENCE OF IDEALISTIC PHILOSOPHY

Our study so far has been chiefly historical. We have traced in more or less regular sequence the course of religious thought from the advent of Protestantism to the beginning of the nineteenth century. We have seen that during that whole period two leading ideas have been prominent—the principle of Subjectivity and the principle of Objectivity. Religion has been interpreted now in terms of the human consciousness, and now in terms of the Divine Decree. The opposition was already implicit in the doctrinal positions of the leaders of Protestantism; but though the distinction did not always conform to Lutheran and Calvinistic teaching, the antithesis grew more pronounced as time went on, until at the end of the eighteenth century the problem confronting the religious mind came to be whether religion was to be interpreted as a purely individual concern, as the quest of man for God, or to be construed from the Divine or absolute standpoint, as the sovereign enactment of the Deity. The attitude to this problem constitutes one of the chief interests of modern theology.

Before discussing, however, the new departure in theology inaugurated by Schleiermacher, and the modern tendencies of his teaching, it will be desirable

to consider some special factors which have greatly modified and enriched recent religious thought.

Among the influences tending to revolutionise modern religious conceptions, a prominent place must be given to the great speculative systems of Idealism which took their rise in Germany at the beginning of last century. To this subject the present chapter will be devoted.

I

The new epoch begins with Kant, who was born in 1724, and died in 1804. His life thus touches two centuries. Like Janus, his mind has two aspects, one of which turns to the past and the other to the future. Along with Lessing he stands as closing the old, and opening the new age. No one can rightly appreciate the significance of Kant, who does not perceive in him the conflict of these two tendencies. If one were to seek a general formula under which to sum up the Kantian philosophy, it might be appropriately entitled an attempt to mediate between opposites. It is a system of reconciliation. In general, it endeavours to harmonise Reason and Faith. On the one hand Kant seeks to vindicate the existence of a moral world-order; and on the other, he is not less anxious to conserve the foundations of scientific knowledge. It is a mistake to represent him simply as an abstract thinker. His main interests were ethical. It was the problem of God and man's relation to Him that concerned him most; and his philosophy would not have exerted the influence it did had it not attempted to justify those deeper yearnings for ultimate truth which all earnest minds have cherished. Two fundamental problems, seemingly independent, but really closely

allied, engaged the thinker of Königsberg. The one was the problem of knowledge ; the other the problem of moral action. What had hitherto passed for knowledge seemed to him to rest upon no solid basis, and therefore to waver between shallow presumption and destructive scepticism. Morality also, and the ideals and purposes implicated in the spiritual life of man appeared to him equally to lack support. But both of these are inalienable possessions of the soul, inwrought into its very being and capable of rational justification if man is to have a meaning in an intelligible world.[1]

The first task, accordingly, which Kant undertakes, is a critical investigation of the act of cognition. Before we can be sure of our knowledge of God we must ask how we know anything at all. Kant was for some time an adherent of the Wolffian Philosophy, but he could not rest satisfied with its easy assumptions. Hence he turned to Empiricism, but a study of Locke's theory of sensation, according to which the mind is the passive recipient of external objects, showed him that unless the mind possesses some unifying principle or faculty of synthesis, all that we could know would be a succession of disconnected sensations, and we would be shut up, as Hume pointed out, to despair of reaching any real truth. " It was the reflection on David Hume," says Kant, " that several years ago first broke my dogmatic slumber and gave a completely new direction to my enquiries." Hitherto it had been assumed that our ideas must adapt themselves to objects ; would it not be possible to change the order and adapt objects to our ideas ? Like the famous astronomer, the

[1] See a suggestive elaboration of this idea worked out with rare insight by Sorley in his recent Gifford Lectures, *Moral Values and the Idea of God.*

metaphysician transferred the centre of observation from the observed to the observer. In the constitution of knowledge the mind contributes as much as it receives. The raw stuff of experience is taken up and moulded to a pattern contained within the mind itself. Time and Space, once regarded as qualities of things external to the mind, are shown to be "forms of sensibility," while the so-called "Categories of the Understanding" are mental principles by whose agency our manifold experiences attain to the unity and coherence of knowledge. In this conception of knowledge is disclosed the distinctive character of Kant's idealism, a conception which has not only revolutionized philosophy but radically affected every problem of knowledge.

The results of Kant's theory of cognition up to this point are negative. We have been moving so far in the region of experience. But what about those existents which lie beyond our experience? Since our minds can deal only with what is presented to them in experience, all we can really know are phenomena or appearances, not things as they are in themselves, but only as they are modified and transformed by the action of the mind. We have no means of knowing what lies behind phenomena, or what exists prior to, or apart from, their being taken up and refashioned by our mental powers. If, then, the most ordinary object cannot be known as it is, much less can the Soul, the super-sensible world and the being of God. Yet these are just the objects that are most vital to man. Scepticism has not quenched the insatiable longing to solve those problems of the spiritual world which continually arise within the mind. May it not be that while a purely scientific knowledge of the soul, the world and God is not available, these ideas need not be regarded as false or illusory? They may have at least

a regulative and stimulating value. They may form postulates of faith, stand as ideals towards which the soul can aspire, and may even afford working hypotheses for the conduct of life.

Nor is this all. Kant is exceedingly loath to give up those ideas which, though transcending experience, reveal to us ideals of absolute value and place in our hands the only available key to the mysteries of existence. What, therefore, he seemingly takes away with one hand, he restores with the other ; and in the Critique of Practical Reason he proceeds to show that if God, freedom and immortality cannot be discovered and validated by pure reason, they may be reached by the moral consciousness. Nor will he allow that the Practical Reason, though it be of a different order, is lower than the theoretic. The moral consciousness is the key to the meaning of the entire universe as well as of human life. Its values are the sole ultimate values, and enable us to interpret in *moral* terms (even though we cannot comprehend in any genuinely *theoretic* fashion) the meaning of the dispensation under which we live. They postulate a universe in which the values of spiritual experience are supported and conserved.[1] Our consciousness of the moral law is, like sense-experience, a given fact. It cannot be deduced from anything more ultimate than itself.[2] It is not a foreign yoke that is imposed upon us. We are subject to our own legislation. The authority of the law springs from the fact that it enjoins the realization of our permanent and essential self. Freedom is the distinctive feature of man, and the reality of it, as a form of noumenal activity, is the cardinal fact of

[1] See *Commentary to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, by Norman Kemp Smith, p. 571.

[2] *Metaphysic of Ethics*. Translated by T. K. Abbott.

Kant's Metaphysic of Morals. By the power of self-determination, a man can break through the chain of natural law and lift himself above all that is temporal and accidental into a 'kingdom of ends.' Freedom is not only the basis of all morality, it is the condition of the immortality of the soul and the guarantee of God Himself. Thus freedom, being for Kant a demonstrated fact, carries with it by implication, the problematic ideas of God and immortality. For reason, in prescribing the moral law, prescribes, as the final and complete end of all our actions, the *Summum Bonum*, that is, happiness proportioned to moral worth. "Owing to the limitations of our faculties, the complete attainment of this supreme end is conceivable by us only on the assumption of a future life, wherein perfect worthiness may be attained, and of an omnipotent Being who will apportion happiness in accordance with merit." [1]

Kant has expounded his views of the meaning of religion in a separate work, *Religion within the Limits of Pure Reason*. This treatise is hardly on a level with his other books. It is a document, however, of some importance in the development of German *Religions-Philosophie*. The author shows himself here to be simply the child of the Enlightenment. His interpretation does not materially differ from the formal rationalism of the Deists. He practically reduces religion to morality. Though he acknowledges the necessity of obeying the commandments of God, he will not allow that such obedience should be actuated by sanctions of fear or hope. The real religion of Kant is "Freedom in the service of the ideal." Nor in his summary of Christian Truth does he rise above the mediæval type. He has little consciousness of the

[1] Smith, *op. cit.* p. 574.

spirituality or power of Christianity. It is for him wholly a natural religion. He denies the miraculous, and finds no place for supernatural revelation. The dogmas of the Church have value only as they possess a moral core, and Scripture must be interpreted solely by the laws of the human understanding. While he uses the current evangelical terms, they have for him only a figurative or symbolic import. For the Person of Christ, however, he expresses sincere respect, but regards Him as Saviour only in so far as He sets before the race a pure and exalted standard of moral life.

In two particulars Kant's treatment of religion differs from that of the Aufklärung—in its recognition of the function of the historical Christian Faith, and " in its repudiation of the easy-going optimism which is repugnant to the very genius of religion." [1] The attitude of Kant's predecessors towards historical religion, and especially historical Christianity, was one of opposition. They saw in the sacred books, symbols, and doctrines of Christian Faith, nothing but obstacles imposed by Priestcraft, and deceit, which must needs be removed if the truths of natural religion were to have free course. Kant, on the other hand, defective as his interpretation of the doctrines of Christianity is, has no sympathy with destructive criticism. Rather may he be said to initiate a more positive and reverent view of religious truth ; and, as against the contemptuous and shallow criticism of the Aufklärung, to vindicate the claim of the historical " husk," at least, of Christianity to respect.

The second point on which Kant parts company with the eighteenth century is his repudiation of the shallow

[1] See Pringle Pattison's *Development from Kant to Hegel*, the religious part of which is republished as a chapter in *The Philosophical Radicals*, 1907.

optimism which prevailed. He saw in the life of man a struggle with sin, and felt that without a sense of evil and shortcoming radical in man, there could be no possibility of that higher life which is presented in the moral law as a challenge and obligation. For Kant, as for the great positive theologies of a later generation, the twin notions of sin and reconciliation, however inadequately he treated them, were at once the roots and distinctive features of all true religion.

But in spite of the stimulus which Kant undoubtedly gave to the reconstruction of theology, he himself never got beyond the mechanical view of Deism. The dualism which he set up between the object of experience and the ' thing in itself,' affected his whole theory of life, and more particularly his philosophy of religion. God, or rather the idea of God, exists. But that is all we can say about Him. What He is in Himself we do not know. He is an object of faith, which has indeed an ethical value, but no intellectual justification. The abstract division of the functions of the mind into pure and practical reason ; and more especially, the inconsistency involved in treating the Ideas as postulates for the moral life but invalid in the theoretic sphere, is suggestive of the old " Faculty Psychology " now effete. The mind or self cannot be divided up into a number of disconnected powers. Kant's real object was to abolish the distinction which previous philosophy had assumed between subject and object, not by suppressing one of the factors, but by showing that thoughts and things are related in all thinking. But in place of the old dualism he created a new dualism —a dualism between Appearance and Reality. He has given, however, to the problem a wholly new form, so that the bald individualism of a Wolff or a Locke is no longer possible. He has vindicated for the mind

the chief function in creating our knowledge of the world; and his permanent achievement is the revolution he has effected in our notion of what constitutes reality, and his suggestion of the direction in which the solution of the problem is to be sought. Indeed, had he been consistent in following out his own idea, that the consciousness of self involves the knowledge of the whole world of things, he would have forestalled much of the later criticism to which his system was subjected; for he would have seen that the solution of "the antinomies of Pure Reason" is to be found, not in emphasizing the distinction between appearances and things in themselves, but rather in the very perception of the unity of the self and the world of objects which self-consciousness involves.

II

It is not surprising that the dualism which infected the Critical Philosophy should give rise to two sharply contrasted tendencies, each of which, laying stress upon one aspect alone, should claim to be the legitimate issue of the teaching of Kant. The one is the sceptical or agnostic tendency which culminates in Positivism; the other is the Speculative tendency, vindicating the Absoluteness of reason, which finds its fullest expression in the School of Hegel.

Comte, the representative of Positivism, acknowledges his indebtedness to Kant,[1] but accuses him of inconsistency in retaining in the ethical sphere a conception which he could not defend in the intellectual. Kant was obliged, if he had been consistent, to repudiate all knowledge of God, the Absolute, and to refuse to make

[1] Comte seems to have had only a very slight knowledge of the Critical Philosophy. See E. Caird, *Social Philosophy of Comte*, p. 81.

any pronouncement regarding the spiritual world, of which, according to his own tenets, we have absolutely no certitude. "Of the real Absolute Being or Principle of the universe," says Comte, "we know nothing, except, perhaps, that He or It is not what men call good." According to Comte the whole progress of man consists in the gradual realization of the necessity of renouncing all effort to reach the reality which is hidden behind the veil of phenomena. It is vain, he holds, to seek certitude as to ultimate reality in either metaphysic or religion. The only proper attitude, therefore, is suspense of judgment or agnosticism. But while Comte affirms that philosophy or religion cannot attain to an absolute principle, since there is a great gulf fixed between the reality of things and our knowledge of them, he practically rejects his own position. On the one hand, he allows Science to supersede metaphysics; and on the other, he sets up in the room of the unknown God the image or idea of Humanity conceived as a great providential Being, in which he finds a sufficient object of worship. Without entering here upon a criticism of Comte's attitude to truth, it is enough to say that his view of the limitation of knowledge cannot be maintained except upon principles which would be fatal to all knowledge of every kind. Moreover, the very acceptance of Humanity in lieu of God is a tacit admission of the necessity of some sort of objective or absolute reality. It matters little what we call our God. That which we ultimately serve and worship must be the best and highest we know.

While the positive development of Comtism has received comparatively little support in Britain, the negative or purely agnostic attitude found favour with a number of thinkers whose influence on the religious thought of last century has been considerable. Kant's

influence upon Sir William Hamilton, and through him on Mansel, proves a basis for the agnosticism of Huxley and Herbert Spencer. In his *Philosophy of the Unconditioned*, Hamilton admits that the knowledge of an object involves its relation to a knowing mind, but contends that while God undoubtedly exists, knowledge of Him is impossible, partly because of the mind's incapacity to transcend the relations of sense-experience ; and also because the glory of the Absolute Deity is incompatible with His being known as He really is. In the interests of what he conceived to be the dignity of Christian Revelation, Dean Mansel adopted a similar view, and maintained that because of His very exaltation and majesty, God must be inaccessible to human thought. Approaching the subject from the side of science, Huxley and Spencer arrived at the same conclusion. The latter affirms that "the ultimate religious truth of the highest possible certainty is that the power which the universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable." Thus Spencer reduces religion to the bare "feeling of awe or sense of mystery before the unknown." If that be all, then God means nothing more for man than an unknown entity ; and the logical issue of Agnosticism is the paralysis of all faith and effort, since the only God it acknowledges is a power devoid of every moral and spiritual attribute.

III

The other and more direct tendency resulting from the philosophy of Kant, was that which found expression in the later German idealism of the transcendental school. The chief representatives of this movement fastened rather upon the principle, tacitly assumed by Kant, of the unifying self which made all knowedge

possible. It was the object of Kant's successors to show that the distinction between phenomena and noumena is a false one. Granted a self to which all things are related, there can be nothing outside our thought, and therefore no absolute opposition between the thinking subject and the world of objects which he thinks. The individual who knows himself is not merely an individual. He is part of all he knows, and all he knows is part of him. Indeed, the consciousness of self lifts a man up to a central and universal position, which relates him with the whole objective world of reality. Without pursuing further the metaphysical implications of this view of knowledge, it will be observed that it has important bearings upon theology. It brings God within the range of human knowledge; and more particularly in seeking to bridge the gulf between the subject and object, man and God, the individual self and the universal self, it concentrates attention anew upon the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation as the union of the human and the divine.

With the metaphysical speculations of the Post-Kantian Idealists we are not here concerned except in so far as they affect their presentation of religion. In all of them there was an evident desire to bring the philosophy of religion into harmony with the accepted doctrines of Christianity. Though Fichte at first accepted Kant's theory of knowledge, he afterwards came to the conclusion that the "thing in itself" is nothing else than a creation of the mind. Both that which knows, and the object which it knows, belong to one ego and have their justification as parts of the same consciousness. Fichte's philosophy thus takes the form of a purely subjective idealism, in which the external world is reduced to a negative entity or non-ego which the self sets up within; and in conflict with

which it attains to consciousness. The real meaning of the self only comes to light in the moral sphere, for life is not thought merely, but action as well. Hence the moral life requires nature as an obstacle, whose resistance has to be overcome in the fulfilment of the moral law. In the manifold strivings on the part of individuals to realize their true selves, Fichte sees the manifestation of the one universal or absolute spirit. To this universal being, as the basis of the moral order of the world, he assigns divine attributes. At a later stage in his career Fichte made a closer approach to religion and sought to give his philosophy a more positive value. He recognized in Christianity a spiritual agency of the deepest significance ; and the Incarnation, as the central doctrine of the Christian Faith, became an element of profound meaning in his interpretation of man and the world. But for him, as indeed for all the exponents of idealism, the historical Christ was a difficulty, and there was a general tendency to sacrifice the historical to the ideal. Fichte's Christology may be taken as a type of the others. He starts from the Johannine Gospel—the doctrine of the Logos. The ' Word ' was the utterance and expression of God, the Eternal One. But the entrance of the Word into the world did not take place at one particular period of history, or in one unique individual. It is the eternal significance, and not the temporal appearance, that matters. The Word becomes flesh in every man who surrenders his life to God. The historical Jesus is the person in whom the manifestation of God has been most fully accomplished. Hence the Incarnation tends to become simply the manifestation of the divine in the human. Humanity is the eternal expression of the Absolute ; and the historical Incarnation is but a particular and typical instance of an eternal principle.

The appearance of the particular Christ was a necessity in world-history. But it is not the concrete fact, but the truth or idea which the fact enshrines, that is of imperishable worth for man.

Schelling began his philosophical career as a disciple of Fichte. But just as Fichte went beyond Kant, so Schelling found it necessary to extend his speculations to fields of nature and history which appeared to him to be neglected. In seeking to combat the one-sidedness of Fichte he went to the opposite extreme, substituting for the subjective principle, 'The Ego is All,' the objective one, 'The All is the Ego,'—the principle that the Absolute manifests itself alike in the world of nature and the world of spirit. Schelling thus depicts to us a self-revealing God who gradually manifests Himself in nature, life and history, partially in matter and unconscious nature, more fully in life and consciousness. "Nature," he says, "is visible mind, and mind invisible nature." Both are distinct, but in both the principle of development is essentially, thought. It was natural that a thinker endowed as Schelling was not only with fine spiritual feeling, but also with a strong historical sense, should endeavour to bring the tenets of the Christian Faith into line with the progress of the world. The Incarnation he regards as the central truth of history. But like Fichte he holds that it is not to be interpreted as a single event in time, but as an eternal and constantly repeated act. Humanity or collective mankind, and not the particular man Jesus, is the true Incarnation. In the story of the Advent the drama of the world is concentrated. While the earlier naturalistic religions deified nature and man, Christianity for the first time humanizes God. God becomes man that man may share the life of God. In searching for more

adequate modes of expressing the gradual unfolding of the Absolute in the world, Schelling had recourse to mysticism, employing sometimes the ecstatic utterances of Neo-Platonism, and sometimes the figurative language of Scripture.

The personality of Schelling has been so overshadowed by that of Hegel that full justice has not been done to the brilliancy and suggestiveness of his ideas nor has he received the credit which is his due for the part his writings have played in widening the spiritual horizon of his age. But for him it is doubtful if Hegel had been the force he became. Poets like Goethe and Coleridge were immensely indebted to his thought; and in voicing the spirit of Romanticism he aided greatly in combating the hard prosaic view of life which prevailed in the eighteenth century.

IV

The Idealistic Movement, begun by Kant and developed by Fichte and Schelling, attained its consummation in the Absolute Idealism of Hegel. He probably represents, not even excepting Schleiermacher, the greatest formative force in modern theology. It is contended that Hegel is now superseded. It is true many elements of his philosophy, particularly the Dialectic of Logic, are discarded as mechanical and artificial, but the breadth and balance of his richly articulated system, his lofty idealism, his historical grasp of the evolution and continuity of thought, and above all, the profound suggestiveness of his ideas, have made an immense impression on the minds of men. If we cannot accept his philosophy as a whole with the enthusiasm of his contemporaries, we must at least recognise that he has placed Idealism in an unassailable

position and has vindicated the priority and productiveness of thought. Even his most ardent disciples will hardly claim that his philosophy has solved the ultimate meaning of life; but all students will acknowledge their undebtedness to him and concede that he has thrown out challenges which no thinker in the realm of philosophical speculation can ignore.

It would be folly in a few sentences to attempt to interpret the philosophy of Hegel. Nor does our immediate purpose entail such an effort. All we wish to do is to indicate some of the directions in which he has influenced modern religious thought. In the greatest of all his works, the *Logik*, Hegel enunciates the fundamental idea of his system, that the unity to which all things must be referred is a spiritual or self-conscious principle. This he seeks to prove by showing that every other category by which it has been sought to explain the world—Cause, Law, Substance, Being, and such-like ultimates, are seen at last to be but expressions of thought, which, when made explicit, are found to involve the principle of self-consciousness. The "Absolute is Spirit," says Hegel. But the spiritual can only come to a knowledge of itself by first externalizing itself, going out of itself and thus becoming an object to itself. The Absolute must not be conceived with Schelling, as an abstract identity; nor as motionless substance, with Spinoza, in which all differences are merged; but as a living spirit, a productive subject, whose essence is life, movement, development through difference to unity; from which all finite things are brought forth and realized, and in which all distinctions are expressed and finally reconciled. Hegel recognises indeed a twofold movement—a movement from the highest to the lowest, and also from the lowest to the highest, from the infinite to the finite, and thence from

the finite to the infinite. God expresses Himself in the world, and the world again comes to consciousness, in the finite spirit of man, in " thinking God's thoughts after Him." The world is thus the evolution of the absolute spirit, the " explication of God." History is the self-realization of the divine, in and through the processes of human experience. Logical considerations are the determining factors in the elaboration of the Hegelian scheme. The same dialectic movement of thought is visible throughout the whole universe. The triple rhythm—thesis, antithesis, and synthesis—is everywhere disclosed. In nature, man and history ; in religion, art, philosophy, as in the Absolute itself, this threefold process prevails. The many in the one, the one in the many, progress through distinction, unity, difference, reconciliation—that is the pulse of the universe, the essence and secret of God Himself. Thought is everywhere and constitutes the structure of reality. " The real is the rational, the rational is the real."

It is in the application to the mysteries of religion that the philosophy of Hegel reveals at once its strength and its weakness. His whole system is indeed a theology. It is nothing less than an attempt, the most daring and ambitious ever conceived by the mind of man, to comprehend all reality as the manifestation of the principles of thought which constitute the essence of the divine mind itself. Like the Socrates, whom Plato describes, Hegel seems to have been commissioned to reveal the truth of God. Hegel's treatment of this subject is to be found more particularly in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion.* Religion is the distinctive element in man. It is that function of the human spirit through which man comes to know himself and God. It is the union in thought of the

finite and infinite. God and man are akin. So far from being disparate in nature, they form an intrinsic unity. God is not a vague perception of a Being dwelling in the solitude of a world beyond; He is not a residual phenomenon, a marginal existence, a something unknown and incalculable. The whole teaching of Hegel is the overthrow of the limits which earlier philosophy set to religious thought. His aim is to show that all thought, when it is grasped by knowledge, is from man's side an exaltation of the mind towards God; while regarded from the Divine side, it is the manifestation by God of His own nature in its infinite variety.

But Hegel is not content to construct a general conception of religion. He attempts to apply it in detail to the interpretation of the facts of religious history. If history be the growing consciousness of God, it must be possible, he considers, to classify the historical religions of the world, and to show that each is essentially a successive stage or determination of the Absolute Idea itself. Consequently the first volume of his *Philosophy of Religion* is a detailed history of the evolution of the earlier natural religions from the awakening of savage life to the fullest unfolding of the self-conscious spirit. The religious history of the world must not be regarded as a series of accidental phenomena determined or modified by merely external conditions, but as the organic evolution of one spiritual principle advancing through definite stages to a predetermined end and goal. The reality of a growing thing lies in its highest form. We explain the first by the last. In religion it is not to the beginning, but to the end, that we must look for the true origin and explanation of its history. The three great stages—(1) The Naturalistic Religions; (2) The Spiritual (Israel, or the

religion of Sublimity ; Greece, or the religion of Beauty ; Rome, or the religion of Utility) ; (3) Christianity, or the Absolute—are but successive moments in the development of the Ideal or conception of religion, of which the last, already working in the lower and shaping them for itself, is the final and perfected end to which all were pointing and tending.

In the second volume Hegel treats of Christianity as the Absolute Religion, the highest synthesis of nature and spirit, the unity of the Transcendent and Immanent, the ideal union of The Divine and Human in the God-Man. Christianity is the true and perfect religion, not in the sense that it alone is true and all others are false, nor because it excludes, but because it includes all others, and reveals what was implicit in them. Christianity comes not to destroy, but to fulfil. Each earlier Faith is a more or less imperfect manifestation of the idea of religion which is only finally and fully disclosed in the religion of the God-Man.

Whatever may be thought of the merit of Hegel's *Philosophy of Religion,* it cannot be denied that it stands for a great idea. His work is the first scientific and, indeed, the most comprehensive treatment of comparative Religion which has yet appeared, and forms the groundwork of more recent attempts of modern scholars.

In the interpretation of the Absolute Religion, Hegel shows his sympathy with the Church's creed, and makes an ingenious use of the historical dogmas of the Christian Faith. For him the Trinity is the highest expression of the Godhead, and the Incarnation is the nerve of the whole system. In the doctrine of the Trinity we have set before us the synthesis of all the moments which the earlier forms of religion disclosed. The three Persons of the Godhead are thus conceived as stages

in the evolution of the Divine idea rather than actual co-ordinate personalities. God is the Father as He exists in eternity, in and for Himself ; God is the Son as He exists in time, in the otherness of the world ; God is the Spirit, as He is returned and reconciled with Himself, God come to full consciousness.

How, it may be asked, does Hegel connect the historical Christ with Christianity ? While God is construed to involve the principle of Incarnation, the Son or second Person is a general, not a particular, historical person. The Christ is not any one man, but the middle term or mediator, the God-Man in whom are expressed and reconciled the divine and the human. He is the expression of the Atonement of God and the world. Sin and redemption are the two terms which are everywhere necessary in the evolution of religion. Evil is an inevitable stage in the explication of the Spirit. Sin is an imperfection, but is also a natural condition. At the same time man cannot be content to remain under sin. He must not evade the conflict of life. To know his limitation is to transcend it. To know that there is latent in him a higher spiritual life, is already to participate in that life. Man is made in the image of God, and has within him the potentiality of the divine. Conscious of alienation he craves reconciliation. But though essentially one with God, he craves also sensible proof of the fact. Hence the need on the arena of history of an example of atonement. By the death of Christ the Absolute is reconciled with Himself, and this act of death, in its very extremity and shame, at once represents the moment of uttermost separation, and the moment of supreme reunion. " God dies in Christ, and thereby not only slays death in Himself, but in Himself rises again and comes to Himself." " Herein," says Hegel, " is expressed the innermost meaning of the

tragedy of the Cross." It is " the death of death " and also the " resurrection of the spirit." The sensuous history in which Christianity first appeared is, however, merely the point of departure for faith. We must detach the essence of religion from its particular presentation. The reconciliation which the God-Man effected on the stage of history enshrines a universal truth. The Church is at once the image and symbol of the living Christ. The reconciliation which the God-Man represents must be continually worked out in individual experience and universal history. But the significant thing is that in Christianity for the first time the fundamental principle of life by death has been enunciated. Man must die to live. Life can only fulfil itself through sacrifice. This law is true for God as for man ; and for man, because it is true for God. In order to realize Himself, God becomes man ; in order that man may return to God, he must die to himself.

The question arises, Did Hegel believe in the Christ as a real historical person ? Much of his phraseology certainly suggests a positive attitude to Christian doctrine. In a remarkable passage in the *Philosophy of History*, he says, " Christ has appeared ; a man who is God ; God who is man ; and thereby peace and reconciliation have come to the world." [1] It would be untrue to say that in his system the historical Jesus is bereft of all significance. To Hegel not less than Schleiermacher, and more than to Kant or Fichte, Christianity centres in Jesus Christ. But it becomes obvious to the careful reader that the philosopher is much more concerned with the *idea* than the *person* of the God-Man. Suggestive as is the Christology of Hegel, the main issue is evaded. While he acknowledges

[1] *Phil. d. Geschichte*, p. 393.

that Jesus was the first to realise the speculative principle for which the Christian religion stands, nowhere does he deal with the personality or inner consciousness of Jesus Himself. He seeks merely to account for the popular faith in Christ ; not for Christ's own faith in His life and mission.

As a matter of fact the nature of Hegel's philosophy, which represents the Absolute as a progressive manifestation of God in human life, precludes the idea of perfection and finality such as Christian Faith attributes to Jesus. If life is a continuous evolution from lower to higher, it seems hardly possible to find a place at any point in the historical process for a perfect manifestation of the Deity. The illimitableness of the thought-process requires a perpetual progress in time, and it would be impossible for the movement to terminate at any one particular point. Each present must be regarded as a mere link in a never-ending chain, and there is no room in Hegel's closely knit scheme for any break or even for any central and culminating event in history, from which there might issue a new departure or fresh impulse of life such as Christian Faith accords to the historical Christ.

The severe intellectualism of Hegel's system was bound to create a reaction, and ere long the seeds of difficulty which were latent in his scheme of thought began to reveal themselves. Soon after the master's death, different interpretations of his philosophy appeared. For a time, indeed, it seemed as if a new form of orthodox faith was to be consolidated upon the basis of the Hegelian establishment of Christianity. Men like Daub (1765), Marheineke (1780-1846), Goeschel and Rosenkranz were ardent disciples who accepted Hegel's conception of the eternal Idea as the reconciliation of the infinite and the finite, and saw in the

historical Christ the realization of that union. But this positive interpretation could not endure, and it was speedily met with the radical criticism of Strauss and the Tübingen school, in whose hands the union between the idea and history, so essential to the Hegelian system, was dissolved, and the historical Jesus reduced to a myth.

The clearest expression of the negative side of Hegelianism is to be found in Ludwig Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity* (*Das Wesen der Christenthum*, 1849), translated by Marian Evans (George Eliot), 1855, in which he utterly renounced the idealistic position and went over to crass naturalism, displacing Christianity by a new religion of Humanity.

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that the influence of Hegel is spent. So late as the eighties of last century, Biedermann made a valiant attempt to build up a constructive interpretation of Christianity upon the Hegelian basis. He contends that in Christ, the actual man, there is given to the world a clear expression of the Union of the Divine and Human. But though Biedermann recognises the necessity of the real manifestation in time of the God-Man, he does not seem able to go much farther than Hegel himself, inasmuch as he only accepts the historical person as a pictorial or symbolic representation of the idea of the Union of the Divine and Human regarded as a constitutive element in the consciousness of Jesus, and thus through His consciousness as the inspiration of Humanity.[1]

Dorner and Pfleiderer, if not actual adherents of Hegel, may be regarded as sympathetic, though independent advocates of the Idealistic Philosophy, who find in the Incarnation the central truth of Christianity.

[1] *Christliche Dogmatik*, ii. p. 583.

In Italy and France Hegelianism has still its zealous supporters; while in Britain and America there flourishes a vigorous Neo-Hegelian School, of which Hutchison Stirling, W. Wallace, Green, Bradley, the brothers Caird, Bosanquet, Sir H. Jones and Pringle-Pattison in Britain; and in America, McTaggart, Harris and Royce, may be considered representatives. In the three volumes, *The Philosophy of Religion* by John Caird, *The Evolution of Religion* by Edward Caird, and *The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity* by John Caird, we have a discussion, in a progressive series of studies, of the problem of Religion and its application to Christian ideas, "which for brilliancy and skill has not often been surpassed." [1]

V

This chapter may be suitably brought to a close by noting in a few sentences, one or two of the directions in which the Idealistic Philosophy has affected subsequent religious thought.

1. The Idealistic Philosophy brought into prominence the conception of *Historical Development.* By the historical spirit we understand the effort to conceive of life, as a whole, and in all its parts, according to the principle of growth. It is difficult for us to realise how modern is this point of view. It had hardly occurred to Kant, who was still for the most part, under the dominance of the static conception of life of the fifteenth century. It was reserved for his contemporary, Herder, to apply the idea of growth to the history of mankind. Lessing still further elaborated the notion in reference to *The Divine Education of*

[1] See *Essence of Christianity* by W. Adams Brown, p. 220. Cf. also *The Rule of Faith*, by W. P. Paterson, p. 332.

Mankind. Montesquieu, in his *Spirit of Laws*, had somewhat earlier a vision of development; and Goethe, who was not without his indebtedness to Herder in early life, applied the idea successfully in his studies of plant life. But it is, most of all, to Schelling and Hegel that the modern world owes the adaptation of the idea of historical evolution to the problem of religion. Out of this effort the science of Comparative Religion has its birth, and in virtue of it the nature of Christian Truth has received radical restatement. Theology is no longer presented as a mechanical and static mosaic of doctrines. It is now conceived as an organic and dynamic development of thought.

2. Idealistic Philosophy has given greater reality to the *Conception of God*. The old idea of a divine artificer, separate from the world, has yielded to the conception of a divine energy, immanent, and continuously operative in all nature, life and history. This new view has affected theology in a twofold way. On the one hand, it has tended to weaken the belief in miraculous intervention, in nature and life. On the other hand, while thus revolutionising the old argument from design, it has enriched the teleological view of the world, emphasizing "the one increasing purpose" immanent in all departments of being, and working to a divine end. The stress laid upon divine immanence, in undermining the old mechanical view of God's relation to the universe, has done good service to modern theology by bringing into prominence the significance of the indwelling spirit as the creative and shaping agency of Providence.

3. Idealistic Philosophy, once more, has given a fresh impulse to *Christian Apologetic*. For one thing the idealistic interpretation of life inaugurated by Kant has proved a valuable bulwark against the

assaults of materialism. Kant and his successors vindicated the priority of thought and showed that man is not a mere creature of sense, but a spiritual being possessing spontaneity and initiative, and able to react upon nature. The idealistic philosophy, moreover, has given intellectual support to Christianity. Hegel's comprehensive attempt to set forth the intelligibility of the universe and to exalt Christianity as the supreme and ultimate moment in the unfolding of the spirit has placed the whole question of Christian Apologetic on a higher plane of thought. The old Apologetic based upon the so-called "proofs for the existence of God" is now discredited, not so much because they are not true, but because they are inadequate and irrelevant. We explain the lower by the higher; and in the revelation of God to man, in and through man's affinity with, and need of, God, we have attained to a conviction of reality far beyond anything that a laborious mathematic or logical proof can afford. In the kingdom of the spirit unity is attained and truth is manifested as the final triumph of the living principle implicit from the first in the very nature of spirit.[1] But while showing the need of a more adequate philosophical basis for religious thought and directing the attention of apologetics to questions which lie on the confines of science and philosophy, the abstract character of Hegel's speculation has raised new difficulties in regard to the Personality and Consciousness of God. Moreover, the dialectic rigidity of Hegel's system has tended to obscure the significance of the human will; and in treating the existence and history of humanity as moments in the manifestation of the absolute spirit the full meaning of human

[1] Cf. the fine volume recently published on *The Idea of God* by W. R. Thomson, p. 216.

personality and individual immortality is apt to be cast into the shade.[1] Thus, while the theological apologetic has undoubtedly gained in depth and interest from its connection with modern philosophy, it is also confronted with problems more subtle and complex than those which came within the purview of the older systems of evidence.

4. Lastly, in concentrating thought upon the Christological problem, Idealistic philosophy has directed attention anew to the study of *Biblical Criticism*.[2] As we have seen, speculative philosophy found in Christ the God-Man, the union of the divine and the human. In Hegel's conception, the Incarnation is the very nerve-centre of his system. But, as we have also seen, Hegel evaded the full significance and implications of the historical appearance of Jesus. And it became more and more evident from the treatment of the subject by Strauss and others, not only that the Christological problem must be faced anew, but that the Bible records must be critically examined if an adequate and satisfying interpretation of the Christ of history is to be obtained and brought into unity with the Christ of faith. A rediscovery of the real Jesus becomes at once the problem and task of modern Theology. There is now a general agreement among theologians, that if Christology is to be valid for the modern mind, its point of reference and departure must be concentrated upon the Jesus of history.[3]

[1] Though it must be acknowledged that in his *Philosophy of Right* Hegel has done full justice to the meaning and value of Personality.

[2] See next chapter.

[3] See H. R. Mackintosh, *The Person of Jesus Christ*, p. 306. Cf. also the profound study of the whole subject in D. W. Forrest's *Christ of History and Experience*.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CONTRIBUTION OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM

Of the influences affecting Theological Study, none has been more productive than the form of research which is technically known as Biblical Criticism. This discipline may be described generally as the application of the principles of historical enquiry to Scripture, according to the same methods of investigation as have been devoted to other classes of literature. Such a treatment involves more than a mere linguistic examination of the text of the Bible. It at once raises the question of Revelation as a whole, the conditions of Inspiration and other problems concerning the relation of the divine and human elements of the records.

The English Deists were among the earliest to broach these questions arising out of the Supernaturalism of the Bible ; and though, from their lack of historical sense and adequate appreciation of the value of testimony, their labours were insignificant in positive results, they achieved the distinction of stimulating the enquiry of German scholarship, to which we are chiefly indebted for the modern science of Higher Criticism. The name has, unfortunately, come to be associated with certain results of a rationalistic and destructive character, and on that account has aroused

prejudice and suspicion as to the impartiality and honesty of its findings.

But Higher Criticism, so called because it deals with the literary and theological content and import rather than the merely verbal and textual elements of the Bible, "rightly understood, is simply the careful scrutiny, on the principles which it is customary to apply to all literature, of the actual phenomena of the Bible with a view to deduce from these such conclusions as may be warranted regarding the age, authorship, modes of composition, sources, etc., of the different books." [1]

Notwithstanding much that is merely tentative, and more that is doubtful, it is not too much to say that the Higher Criticism has already yielded positive results which have revolutionised our view of divine revelation and brought within reach fresh data, on the basis of which a more intelligible study of the Gospel history, and especially of the Personality and teachings of Jesus Christ, has been rendered possible.

The object of this chapter is to give a brief account of the progress of Biblical Criticism, both on the Continent and in Britain, in order that we may form some estimate of the nature and value of its contributions to Modern Theology.

I

It will be appropriate to begin our sketch by glancing first at the main stages of Old Testament research. Though the origin of the movement is usually ascribed to Eichhorn, to whom the name "Higher Criticism" is due, the pioneer in the field was Astruc, a French physician (1684-1766) who threw out the

[1] *The Problem of the Old Testament*, p. 9 f., by James Orr.

suggestion that the Books of Moses were of a composite character. This surmise he based on the discovery that the divine name in some portions of Genesis is represented by the word 'Elohim,' and in others by the term 'Jehovah.' He concluded, therefore, that the author, Moses, has used earlier, and in some cases, conflicting documents in the composition of his work. Eichhorn (1752-1827), professor at Jena, though working independently of Astruc, supplemented his theory by observing that the distinction in the names of the Deity was accompanied by other literary peculiarities. They were found to be characterised by a vocabulary and style of their own, which made the difference more apparent. Eichhorn was a Rationalist of the Paulus type, but as Cheyne says, "he was a good Christian man."[1] It is interesting to note that he was greatly influenced by his friendship with Herder, and the poetic interests which the author of *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry* inspired in the Biblical critic did much to broaden his views and mellow his nature. It is impossible to linger over the early founders of the science, such as Ilgen, the erudite successor of Eichhorn at Jena, and De Wette, Schleiermacher's colleague in the newly instituted university of Berlin, who began his professional career as a cold rationalist, but was converted by Moravian influences to a devout Evangelicalism. Few men exercised in their day by their life and teaching a more salutary influence than "this genuine Nathanical soul," as Neander calls him. In the year 1805 De Wette claimed for Deuteronomy on grounds of style and content, an origin not earlier than the reign of Josiah, thus separating it from the other books, and recognizing a Hexateuch instead of the

[1] See *Founders of Old Testament Criticism*, to which valuable résumé I am much indebted in this section.

traditional Pentateuch. He showed that the author of Chronicles had utilized the much older books of Samuel and Kings, transforming them in a Levitical interest, and generally idealizing them on behalf of the theocracy. While opposing the naturalistic explanations of the Miracles, he favoured a mystical or legendary interpretation of some of the supernatural passages of the Old Testament, but defended their poetic beauty and spiritual significance. All primitive people reveal traces of legendary influence, and there is no valid reason, he held, why we should not admit a similar process in Jewish history. We must also pass over the more conservative writers such as Bleek, Hengstenberg and Havernich who contended against the negative trend of criticism.

Pfleiderer [1] has observed that the year 1835 marks an epoch in Biblical Criticism. In that year appeared Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, which introduced a new era of New Testament research, and also Vatke's *Religion of the Old Testament*, containing the beginning of a not less important revolution in regard to the Hebrew Scriptures. Vatke's work met with a strange fate. Partly on account of the revolutionary nature of its theory, and partly also because of the severely philosophical and somewhat uncouth terminology in which it was presented, it remained practically unnoticed until about 1865, when the same critical views were again revived in a different form. As a disciple of Hegel, Vatke applied the law of development of the national consciousness to Hebrew history, maintaining that the earlier stages of the Old Testament were but the incomplete expressions of truths which the later period made explicit. So-called primitive history is created by later legends. The notion that Moses enunciated

[1] *Evolution of Theology*, p. 209.

the sublime idea of God, and published the moral and civil code in the infancy of the race is incompatible, he held, with the later history of the Jews. It is impossible that an entire nation should suddenly sink from a high religious condition to a comparatively low one, as is affirmed to be the case in the times of the Judges and Kings. The merit of Vatke's work is that it directed attention to the central principle, novel in his day, but now generally accepted, that the religion of Israel, like all other movements of belief and thought, is subject to the law of growth. Vatke independently asserted, what is now becoming the prevailing view, the late date of the Levitical legislation : and though he did not work out his ideas, the fact that as early as 1835 he anticipated many of the subsequent findings of scholars, entitles him, as Cheyne remarks, " to a high place among the founders of Criticism." [1]

No account, however slight, of Old Testament scholarship could omit the name of Heinrich Ewald (1803-1875), the most renowned Hebrew Exegete and probably the most brilliant scholar Germany has produced. Independent in character and conviction, he refused to belong to any party. Dictatorial and egotistical in manner and keenly argumentative, he claimed to rule Biblical Science. Though he held advanced views on Old Testament criticism, his interests were not confined to Hebrew History. He laboured also in the field of New Testament enquiry, and waged a fierce war against the presumptions of the Tübingen School. He possessed a fine feeling for the niceties and nuages of the Oriental languages. And no writer has disclosed a more sympathetic appreciation of the sublimity and genius of the Hebrew race.[2] " History," says the great

[1] Cheyne, *Founders of Old Testament Criticism*, p. 138.

[2] See *Poetical Books of Old Testament* and *Prophets of Old Testament*.

Niebuhr, "has two means by which it supplies the deficiencies of its sources—Criticism and Divination." Ewald was gifted as few have been with these two qualities. And these he brought to bear upon his monumental work—*The History of the People of Israel.*[1] In intellectual force and moral vision it is unparalleled. It has given a fruitful impulse to the historical interpretation of the Old Testament. It stands in the direct line of succession as preparing the way for the later achievement of Wellhausen who dedicates his own history of Israel, "To my unforgotten master, Heinrich Ewald."

In regard to the special problem of the Pentateuch, the labours of the spiritually minded Delitzsch, who contended for the composite character of Genesis, and Hupfeld, who reaffirmed Ilgen's contention that there were really two Elohist writers—deserve to be recorded. It was argued by these scholars that each of the three documents represented in Genesis was originally an independent work, thus putting an end to the 'supplement' hypothesis which had so long held the field. While the matter thus rested for some years, though not without dissentient voices, a somewhat sensational development of the problem was reached by the appearance in 1866 of Graf's work entitled, *The Historical Books of the Old Testament.* Following the suggestion of Vatke and Reuss, Graf, professor in Leipzig, propounded the revolutionary view that the Levitical legislation recorded in the Pentateuch was not, as was commonly supposed earlier, but later than Deuteronomy, and indeed was a product of the age of the Exile. He still for a time accepted the ordinary opinion that the historical narratives belonged to the

[1] Third Edition, published in 1864-8; English translation in 8 vols., 1867-86.

earlier period. But Kuenen, the famous Dutch scholar, and Riehm, showed that this was an untenable theory. "History and law must go together," they affirmed. Either both are late or both are early. Before his death Graf acknowledged the force of this argument, and ultimately decided for the Post-Exilian origin of all the books. The books of the Pentateuch "bear the clearest traces of their Post-Exilic authorship," he wrote. Wellhausen, in 1885, completed the work of Graf, and secured the ascendancy of what the most advanced school call "the Critical view." In a series of Articles, which were finally incorporated in the second edition of his *Geschichte Israels*, 1886, Wellhausen in the most definite manner determines the epoch of the Mosaic Legislation, showing on grounds mostly historical, in accordance with the author's conception of the evolution of religious ideas, that it could not have come into being till after the exile, or at soonest, under the reign of Hezekiah.

If correct, the theory just outlined obviously involves the entire reconstruction of the Old Testament, and cannot be without its effects on the interpretation of the New. But it is too much to say, as some do, that if this revolutionary pronouncement be accepted the divine or supernatural element in the religious history of the Jews must be eliminated. We are certainly indebted to the leaders of this School for a more exact appreciation of the phenomena to be explained; and if many of their findings must be pronounced as arbitrary, and, at best, conjectural, they have at least created a fresh interest in the problem of the Old Testament, and have confronted us with the likelihood that some of the traditional beliefs, based on a mechanical idea of revelation, are unwarranted.[1]

[1] See a comprehensive treatment of the whole subject from the Conservative point of view by James Orr, *The Problem of the Old Testament.*

II

Just as Vatke's *Biblical Theology* marked an era in Old Testament Criticism, so the publication in the same year, 1835, of Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, and Baur's *Pastoral Epistles*, signalised a fresh departure in New Testament study.

There were, indeed, earlier essays in this department. From the time of Reimarus and Lessing's editing of the *Wolfenbüttel Fragments*, not only the Rationalists of the Paulus type, but theologians of a more positive tendency, devoted their attention to New Testament problems.

New Testament Criticism has been directed chiefly to three questions : The Person of Christ, The Rise of Primitive Christianity, and the Problem of the Synoptic Gospels in relation to one another and to the Fourth Gospel.

1. The first is associated with the name of David Friederich Strauss. Strauss was a disciple of Hegel. On the death of their master in 1836 his followers broke into two camps—the 'right wing,' which hailed Hegelianism as the vindication of Christian doctrine : and the 'left wing,' which regarded it as the destruction of religious faith.

Like others of the right wing, Strauss was at first intoxicated with the interpretation of Christianity as it appeared in the writings of Hegel, but he came to feel that the position of the historical Christ must be more definitely defined. Who was this being whom the Church idealized ? Whence did He come ? Did the fact of His existence originate the divine idea ? Or did the idea create the fact ? Strauss contends for the need of an impartial and scientific examination of the materials available in order to construct a trustworthy

life of Jesus. He criticises with equal severity the standpoints of both supernatural and rational exegetes. The fundamental assumption dominating Strauss's entire enquiry is that the miraculous is impossible. He admits some foundation in history for Christ's personality. But the Gospel narrative is in the main a collection of gradually accumulated myths—" a wreath set on the Master's brow by reverent and loving fancy." Of Jesus Himself little real knowledge is now ascertainable. Two considerations contributed to the formation of the Gospel picture—the expectation of a Messiah and the belief that Jesus was the predicted Messiah. Legend operating upon a minimum of fact, and myth growing up in the minds of an imaginative people, gradually clothed the earthly figure of Jesus with supernatural qualities. Poetic phantasy is at bottom responsible for the portrait which the Evangelists have enshrined in the Gospels. The Christ of faith in no sense coincides with any particular individual. " The idea," says Strauss, " loves not to pour all its fullness into one example." Only the race can answer to the idea. Not one man, but Humanity as a whole, is capable of embodying the divine ideal.[1] It ought in fairness to be observed that by a ' myth ' Strauss does not mean what is fabulous, but rather what is ' Spiritual ' or ' symbolic,' as opposed to historical. He admits that the statements of the Gospels are ' true ' : he only denies they are historically true. Truth is not derived from external history. External history is derived from truth. The outward incident is only a poetic representation of an eternal verity. The myth is not the concoction of an individual writer. It is the

[1] Strauss, *Leben Jesu*, first published, 1835. Translated by George Eliot, 1846. A New *Life*, for the German people, appeared in 1864, in which he attempted to reconstruct a positive life of Christ.

unconscious and gradual creation of the Common Mind.

It is difficult to evade the conclusion that the Christ of Strauss is the product of his own fancy. The *Life* professed to be critical, but it shows itself to be throughout a pure abstraction of the philosophical imagination. The person of Jesus in the hands of the critic fades into a lifeless shadow. The mythical theory is a clumsy expedient to account for the Gospel story which now impresses no one. Even the author himself soon lost faith in it, and advanced to a more negative position.[1]

2. The second problem is connected with the name of Ferdinand Baur and the Tübingen School. The very extravagance of Strauss's conclusions led to their repudiation, and prepared the way for a more critical enquiry into the sources and conditions of life and thought amid which the Church's beliefs took their rise. Attention was specially concentrated upon the question, evaded by Strauss, how it came about that the primitive Church endowed the Man, Jesus, with Messianic qualities. The mythical theory had assumed that this idealizing process was unconsciously wrought. Bruno Bauer (1809-1882) rejected this notion as untenable, contending that the Messianic idea had no existence before the Christian era, and was a deliberate invention of the first disciples. This doctrine of intentional design, though preposterous in itself, brought into the field one of the greatest historical critics of modern times—Ferdinand Baur (1792-1860), professor at Tübingen, and the founder of the Tübingen School, whose investigations into early Christianity have profoundly influenced modern views of the origin and development

[1] See *Der alte und neue Glaube* (1872), in which the author seeks to prove that Christianity is dead and that a new faith must be built up out of art, and the scientific knowledge of nature.

of the Christian Faith. He gathered up the fragmentary results of a generation of mere negation, and sought to place the New Testament writings in their true setting as the basis of Church history. Incidentally he demolished the Mythical theory. His own particular attitude has been superseded, and many of his inferences disproved. But in making Criticism the handmaid of history, the general trend of Baur's labours has been in the interests of constructive Christian doctrine.

Like Strauss, Baur was trained in the School of Hegel, and started his studies from the Hegelian standpoint. His conception of the course of events in the first three centuries may be described as a theory of historical evolution by the fusion of opposites in a higher Unity. The Hegelian scheme of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, seemed to find justification in the recognised phenomena of history. Christianity had its origin in Judæism, but inspired by its consciousness of a world-wide mission it strove to overcome the limitations of its early environment. As a recent scholar puts it, "It was the struggle of the infant Faith against its swaddling bands."

The outlines of Baur's theory may be briefly stated. The early history of the Church is the battlefield of opposing ideas. Two tendencies from the first were in conflict—a Jewish and a Gentile. It was a conflict between those who conceived Christianity as a universal religion, and those who regarded it as a reformed Judæism. Peter and Paul are the representative personalities in whom the contest centres. The key to the scheme is the alleged existence of a Petrine or conservative, and a Pauline or progressive party. The conflict is mirrored partly in the "Acts of the Apostles," a composition of the second century, written

to gloze over the differences of the original apostles: and partly in the authentic epistles of St. Paul—"Galatians," "Romans," "Corinthians." In these documents the Church is revealed a srent by schism.[1] Later attempts are made at Conciliation, the stages of which are reflected in the Synoptic Gospels. The final synthesis is attained in the Fourth Gospel, written according to Baur as late as the year 170. In A.D. 150 to 200, Christianity, rejecting extremes of doctrine on both sides, became solidified into the Catholic Church, formulating its 'rule of faith,' determining its canon, and centralizing its administration and authority. The transference of the Gospel during that period from Jewish to Gentile soil is really the outstanding fact against which as a background the literature must be read; and the initial stages of the process are marked by the controversy of Paul and the Galilean Apostles. Gradually there emerges out of the conflict the ideal conception of the God-Man, which combines in a higher unity Hebrew particularism and Gentile universalism, the ascetic righteousness of the Jew with the geniality and grace of the Greek. In the Logos of the Fourth Gospel all tendencies at last meet and merge. In Christ, the Centre of history, as imagined fully by the Johannine writing, all differences are reconciled. He who is at once the Son of God and the Son of Man, in virtue of His universal mission and common brotherhood, draws all men unto Him, and the Gospel of Divine Love, of which He is the embodiment and symbol, becomes the hope of the whole world.

There is undoubtedly something fascinating to the student of history in the imposing drama here unfolded, and it is not wonderful that scholars like Zeller and Schwegler were enthralled by it. But a later generation

[1] Bacon, *The Making of the New Testament*, p. 39.

has regarded the structure with more impartial judgment. The scheme has proved to be somewhat forced and artificial. The facts do not always fit the theory. A more careful study and the discovery of new facts have corrected many of the conclusions of the Tübingen School. Some of the dates have been put back at least half a century. It has become patent that 'Paul's Gospel' included more than a mere antithesis of Law and Grace. He had other opponents besides the Judaizers and had to vindicate the Faith against the perversions of Hellenistic Mystics quite as much as against Pharisaic legalists. Modern Criticism, however, acknowledges its debt to Baur and his co-workers for a clearer definition of its task and method. In two respects, at least, their labours have a permanent value. (1) They have exalted and enlarged the function of Criticism. It has ceased to be merely a debate about texts and dates, and is concerned now primarily with the origin and growth of ideas as embodied in primitive Christian literature. (2) They have also vindicated for all time the unity of the New Testament, showing that its various books, amid all their differences of origin, purpose and authorship, were working for the enthronement of one great truth—the pre-eminence of Christ. The results of the Tübingen School require not so much to be disproved as corrected. The aim of Criticism is Construction, and it is the distinction of Baur to have prepared the way for a solution of the problem of the relation of Pauline Christology to Gospel teaching.

3. With regard to the third problem, 'the Synoptic Problem,' little needs to be said. The enquiry has largely resolved itself into a question of priority. The Synoptics, while revealing difference, exhibit an even larger amount of agreement in content and

language, which cannot be accounted for except on the theory of a common source. The question is, do they all draw independently from an oral tradition ; or some lost document ; or is one of them the original from which the others borrow? Of the three theories,—the 'oral,' the 'documentary' and 'Dependence' theory,—the first, proposed by Gieseler in 1818,—the theory of a common tradition—has prevailed until lately. But recent criticism considers that Mark is the oldest, and that its materials have been taken up and incorporated by the others. This view maintained originally by Griesbach (1745-1812), was accepted by Schleiermacher. The theory as it was first formulated, left a large amount of matter, partly common to Matthew and Luke, and partly peculiar to Luke alone, unaccounted for. It was necessary, therefore, to postulate a Second source—"The Precepts of the Lord," reported by Papias to have been compiled by Matthew in the Aramaic tongue. These two sources constitute the "two document theory," which holds the field to-day. The dates have been gradually put back, and the traditional authorship of many of the New Testament books has been, in several cases, confirmed. A powerful vindication of the Lukan authorship of the Third Gospel and Book of Acts has come recently from the pen of Harnack, who maintains that "on this, as on many other points regarding Early Christian Literature, tradition is right." [1]

While New Testament criticism has not neglected the problems which the Epistles present, and more assured convictions are being arrived at in reference to the doubtful Pauline writings, the Fourth Gospel, and the Johannine writings generally, are becoming the storm centre of controversy. Debate still agitates

[1] Harnack, *Luke, The Physician.*

over the name attached by tradition to these writings. If we cannot determine their actual authorship, the writings can at least be assigned to a definite locality—Ephesus, and to a fairly definite date, from 105 to 110 A.D. This is of great importance, since it enables us to understand their purpose and bearing. Even those who detect minute distinctions in style and aim between the Epistles and the Gospel, are ready to admit that both emanate from the same period and represent the same school of thought ; and the most recent scholars treat them as the products of one individual. Whatever be the external conditions amid which the Fourth Gospel came into being, its historical value and spiritual purpose are now deeply appreciated. It is recognised as before all else, to be a theological treatise, an interpretation of the Person of Christ, written " that men might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing they may have life in His name." The author's aim is to give not facts but truth, not incidents for their own sake, but as manifestations of the power and glory of the Incarnate Logos. This Gospel is felt to be a new type wholly distinct from the earlier Synoptics. Its purpose, however, is not apparently to " supplement " the others in the way of adding facts they have omitted, but rather to interpret and transfigure the external and the visible by throwing around them the illumination of spiritual significance. Surely the Consciousness of Christendom is trembling on the verge of the truth. If not John, then surely one of Johannic mind and spirit, is the author of this priceless legacy to man. Once more, it looks as if " tradition is right."

Thus, not in reference to the Fourth Gospel alone, but in regard to the whole Bible, the trend of criticism, which at first was too exclusively concerned with

questions of language, framework and authorship, has passed into higher and more important fields, in which the main interests centre in the human historical condition and spiritual import and teaching of the Books as a revelation and witness to man of the mind of God.

III

Owing to various causes the science of Biblical criticism in Britain at the beginning of the nineteenth century was practically non-existent. For one thing there prevailed at this time a sad indifference to learning on the part of the clergy and few theologians had any knowledge of the results of continental scholarship. The traditional view of the Scriptures was taken for granted. The Bible was a divine product entirely different from all other writings, and the various books of which it was composed were regarded as all of equal value. The theology of the period was principally of an apologetic nature, which dealt with the " proofs " for the existence of God, or was directed to questions of prophecy and miracle as evidences of the inspiration of the Bible and the verity of the Christian religion.

Early in the nineteenth century several of the Bampton lecturers dealt with the relations of science and religion, defending the Biblical account of Creation against recent geological discoveries. Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, published in 1830, however, did much to displace the old catastrophic theory by the suggestion of a unitary force operating throughout the natural world and gradually effecting the changes which have taken place upon the earth. The rise of Darwin's evolution-theory tended still more to relax the old belief in successive creative acts and direct the efforts

of theologians to harmonise the evolutionary processes exhibited in nature with the Mosaic record.

In the sphere of criticism—with the exception of Alexander Geddes, a Scottish priest, who pointed out that Moses could not be the author of the Pentateuch, since he recorded his own death; and Marsh, who sought to familiarise his countrymen with German research by translating Michaelis' *Introduction to the New Testament*—little, before the beginning of the nineteenth century, merits notice.[1] Such criticism as then existed in Britain was modelled in the style of Paley's *Horae Paulinae*. Like most writers of his time, Paley had no idea of the differences of period and country. He never contemplated the dismemberment of the "Acts" into original documents, nor did he form any estimate of the comparative value of the "undesigned coincidences" for which he was in search. All the Epistles were placed on the same level of genuineness and importance. He has been charged with "the error of regarding the writers of the New Testament as men who sat at a desk to compose a book."[2] Questions of origin and tradition never troubled him. A divine superintendent guarded the various writers and guided them, on some principle of "pre-established harmony," to collective agreement.

The translation of Niebuhr's *History of Rome* by Thirlwall and Julius Hare in 1827, revolutionised the British conception of criticism generally, and did not a little to suggest the application of the same principles which the German historian had adopted in reference to the legendary story of Rome to the early narratives of the Bible. Two years later Milman's *History of the Jews* exemplified this method, emphasizing the human

[1] See Cheyne, *op. cit.*

[2] See Jowett, *Interpretation of Scriptures*, and other Essays.

element and treating the incidents and characters of the Old Testament as narratives of common history. The work was hotly condemned by the orthodox party. It has, however, been praised by Dean Stanley as the first decisive attempt to introduce German erudition into England, and the first palpable indication that the Bible may be studied like any other book. Arnold's *History of Rome* was also modelled on that of the German historian, and his advocacy of the application of the historical method to the Bible gives to the Master of Rugby a leading place among the pioneers of criticism in our country. In his essay *On the Right Interpretation and Understanding of the Scriptures*, published in 1832, he contends for a wider outlook and a more rational interpretation of Revelation, emphasizing its progressive character and laying stress on the human not less than the divine element in the Bible. Arnold was in advance of his age. But his fine spirituality of mind was a proof against rationalistic tendencies. His early death precluded him from contributing largely to theological literature, but his robust and truly human personality left a strong impress upon his generation.

Of the long line of English scholars who, as exegetes and commentators, from Alford to Westcott and Hort, have consecrated their learning to the textual elucidation of the New Testament, it is impossible to speak here. Nor can we do more than mention the brilliant circle of English and Scottish Hebraists who have not only made accessible the results of German criticism, but have also made original contributions to the Old Testament problem. The honour of being among the first in this work belongs chiefly to John William Colenso (1814-1883), the brave and intrepid Bishop of Natal, who in the teeth of much opposition, and not without

loss of place and name, fought the battle of liberty and truth. Convinced of the improbability of many of the statements of the Bible, he published in the year 1862 *The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua critically examined.* The volume greatly offended the Anglican Church of his day, and led to his deposition from his see and ultimately to his excommunication. Colenso unhesitatingly adopted the Graf-Wellhausen theory. Though lacking capacity for special historical criticism and dwelling too much on mere verbal and numerical inaccuracies, he nevertheless did not a little to prepare his countrymen for a broader and more intelligent view of the Old Testament. It must suffice to name Dr. Samuel Davidson, the venerable scholar who suffered expulsion from his professorship on account of "his advanced views": Rowland Williams (1817-70), the friend of Ewald, whose "life is the history of an epoch of English thought," and "whose work on the Hebrew Prophets," according to Ewald's verdict, "was unparalleled in English Literature"; E. H. Perowne, whose *Commentary on the Psalms* (1864), has made all students his debtor; Pusey, better known as a leader of Tractarianism, yet no mean Hebrew scholar of the conservative type; and Dean Stanley, beloved of all for his tolerance and charity, the picturesque delineator of Biblical lands and scenes, and the author of *Lectures on the Jewish Church,* a work distinguished not less for its literary grace than its accurate scholarship.

The modern period of Old Testament criticism was opened by what, without exaggeration, may be termed the Scottish School. Three names stand out. Professor A. B. Davidson held the Chair of Old Testament Literature in the Free Church, and since 1900 in the United Free Church College, Edinburgh, and during

his tenure of forty years, sent forth a succession of singularly proficient students, many of whom have achieved European fame. Reserved, cautious and judicial, his life and thought coloured by his Aberdonian extraction, Davidson, with all his profundity and suggestiveness, has hardly fulfilled the expectations of his admirers. His power lay in his genius for teaching and in the inspiration he imparted. Professor Cheyne says of him ; " as a higher critic Professor Davidson sacrifices too much to the Philistines." His pupil, William Robertson Smith, is probably the most brilliant critic of the Old Testament that has yet appeared in English speaking countries. Daring yet devout, Smith has done more than any other to acquaint his countrymen with the best results of the higher criticism.[1] From 1870 to 1881 he held the Chair of Hebrew in Aberdeen Free Church College. Into the various phases of his trial, consequent on the publication of a series of articles in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, by which he was ultimately removed from his Chair, we cannot enter. He had many friends, among whom Wellhausen, the eminent critic and historian, stood pre-eminent. In 1883 Smith was elected Professor of Arabic in Cambridge. His later Semitic studies reveal the same accuracy and depth of knowledge, the same independence of judgment, and, what is more rare, the same imaginative idealism of which his earlier writings afford evidence.[2]

A quarter of a century ago Professor Cheyne remarked, " it is the spirit of compromise I chiefly dread for our younger students." But the most characteristic feature of present day scholarship in English speaking

[1] See his volumes on *Old Testament in Jewish Church*, and *The Prophets of Israel.*

[2] See *Kinship to Marriage in Early Arabia* (1885), and *The Religion of the Semites* (1889).

countries is not hesitancy, but rather what we prefer to call the spirit of caution. The younger writers are not disposed to be over-mastered by the prestige of German names. They stand on their own feet and form their own judgments. A native criticism, as well as a native theology is growing up on British and American soil. To-day there are scholars at home not a whit behind their continental contemporaries. The extravagances of the Graf-Wellhausen theory are now being discounted and a more sober and impartial estimate is being formed in regard to Old Testament questions. Writers are not now so prone to dogmatise ! And with larger knowledge, enriched by the study of archaeology, geographical exploration, inscriptions and comparative religion, the complexity of the subject is more frankly acknowledged, while the unwisdom of pronouncing anything more than a tentative verdict is avoided. The progress of critical opinion in Britain and America during recent years is remarkable. The consensus of so many acute scholars of different countries cannot rest upon illusion, but rather, in spite of diversity as to details, upon a groundwork of solid fact. But though the cogency of the reasoning on which the more important conclusions are based is generally acknowledged, it is significant that even the most advanced critics, such as Sanday, Driver, Kirkpatrick, H. E. Ryle and George Adam Smith in Britain : Francis Brown, E. F. Moore and B. W. Bacon in America, are inclined to submit their opinions with considerable caution and a measure of diffidence.[1]

In conclusion it may be asked, What effect will the critical interpretation of Scripture have upon modern

[1] Cf. Driver, introduction to the *Literature of the Old Testament*, preface.

religious thought? It may be safely said that the results of the higher criticism are not viewed to-day with the same alarm which greeted its earlier utterances. As the strife of tongues has died down, and the dust of early controversies has cleared away, it is seen that modifications in the outward structure of the Bible cannot rob man of the great body of moral and spiritual truth which it contains, nor reduce the value of the blessing which God has thus conferred on the human race. When people are prone to disparage theological enquiry as liable to create confusion and doubt, may it not be well to remind them that truth ought not to be regarded as merely "instrumental," but desirable for its own sake, even though no apparent "good" results from its pursuit? But after all, "truth" and "good" are, in the highest sense, wedded. There is no real intellectual achievement that is not ultimately linked with moral benefit. No one would desire to believe a lie or retain a delusion however immediately advantageous it might seem to be. It must not be forgotten, however, that modern criticism is not wholly negative. If it creates some difficulties it removes many others. In the hands of Christian scholars, as is now acknowledged, it does not destroy, but rather strengthens the idea of Inspiration. It seeks only to determine its nature, the conditions under which it operates, and the literary forms through which it manifests itself. The recognition of a human factor in the Bible quickened and sustained by the divine spirit, deepens our reverence and wonder, while it enlarges our conception in regard to the nature of Him who is at once immanent in, and transcendent over history. If the human element is being more clearly discerned, the divine is all the more riveting the attention of the thoughtful.

The radical question of to-day which Biblical criticism is forcing upon us is the place of the miraculous or supernatural in life and development.[1] We cannot limit miracles to the past, thus ignoring the new departures both in the spheres of the natural and spiritual world. Does the idea of historical development, now almost universally acknowledged in every realm, make impossible the belief in a Self-manifesting God? Does evolution exclude the influx of divine forces?[2] On the contrary, may we not say that religious faith by its very essence demands a continuous self-communication on God's part? Is Biology the first and last word in the explanation of life's values?[3] Are we not rather constrained to believe that God does not merely give once and for all the original compelling force, but is continually working in human life "both to will and to do"? It is clear that the relation of God and man presented in the Bible is incompatible with the view that the world is a self-enclosed system of natural law into which nothing new can enter. The Old Testament is seen in the light of modern research to be a living book in which are disclosed, amid manifold varieties of national and individual character, an increasing purpose on the part of God and, on the part of man, a growing consciousness of the divine presence, which point prophetically forward to the fuller manifestation in Christ.

[1] See Wendland, *Miracles and Christianity*, especially chapter iv. where the view of Troeltsch is discussed.

[2] This question is more fully discussed in the next chapter, "The Effects of Science on Religion."

[3] In reference to the biological view, see Pfleiderer's, *Entwicklung des Christentums*, p. 4. Also Stange, *Grundriss der Religions-Philosophie*, § 18.

CHAPTER IX

THE BEARING OF SCIENCE ON RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

THE old quarrel of poets and philosophers of which Plato speaks, is probably as far from settlement as ever, since, according to Plato, it could only be healed when poetry was recognised as a form of truth, and philosophy as a kind of poetry. In like manner it may be said that the conflict, almost as ancient, between Religion and Science, will be ended only when the prophets of religion and the champions of science recognise that in spite of their differences of method both are seeking truth, and may be mutually helpful in reaching the principle of life which is hidden beneath the outward mechanism of the world.

Theology was first in the field, and it was only natural that when science came upon the scene the earlier claimant should be jealous of her rival and warn her off as a trespasser. But Science was not disposed to acknowledge priority of assumption, and could not recognise any province as already staked off, nor renounce her right to occupy any field to which reason called her. Religious authority and natural science, therefore, have been opposed from the earliest, and the history of freedom is largely the story of their conflict. From the Renaissance to the French Revolution, and

indeed to our own times, all the important events of history are related to the struggle between the Church and the world of discovery. It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that the interests of religion and science are incompatible and that they have exercised upon one another no influence for good. It is hardly conceivable that two such mighty forces in their interaction upon mankind should have been without some modifying effect upon each other. Gradually, though not without a bitter struggle, facts which observation and experience incontestably proved, came to be acknowledged by the Church, and finally to be incorporated in the accepted view of life.

In the relation of religion and science three successive phases may be roughly distinguished. The first may be designated the period of theological dominance : the second, that of independence and conflict : the third, of mutual respect and co-operation.

I

In the early centuries of Christianity ecclesiastical authority exercised absolute jurisdiction over man, and all the affairs of life were regulated by religious belief. The Bible interpreted by the Church was supreme and intellectual activities were wholly subordinated to Scriptural law. The most casual phrases and figurative expressions of the Bible were decisive in all controversy. Bodily ailments were ascribed to occult agencies. The study of medicine was exposed to the charge of sorcery. Physical research was denounced as magic and treated as a crime. Alchemy, the forerunner of chemistry, was considered a diabolical art, and in 1317 was condemned by the Pope. Roger Bacon suffered fourteen years imprisonment in

the thirteenth century on account of his scientific zeal. The discouragement of science must not, however, be ascribed solely to the Church's love of power nor even to its greed of gain. It is true that as clerical piety declined and corruption spread, the ecclesiastical authorities found it convenient to suppress knowledge and promote superstition as the best means of retaining their hold over the people and increasing their revenues. But the two strongest motives which actuated the Church in discrediting science were zeal for God and dread of the consequences of knowledge. The clergy acted according to their faith. Heresy was the most deadly of sins, and the only way to preserve the purity of belief was to ban all enquiry. The heritage of truth had been committed to the Church and her priests had no choice but to stamp out the seeds of error as they would the germs of a plague. No Father of the Church was held in greater reverence than Augustine, and none was more distinguished as a scholar, yet he formulated the principles of persecution for the guidance of future generations, based upon the words of our Lord, " compel them to come in." It was his honest belief, a belief shared by the Church for centuries that, when a man's eternal destiny was at stake, it was imperative for his own sake and the sake of others to employ every means to suppress error and enforce the truth.

But hardly less potent than zeal for the truth was fear of the consequences of knowledge. In the middle ages reason was simply paralysed by dread. Men were obsessed with the mystery of life and death, and haunted with the terrors of the invisible world. Surrounded, as they believed themselves to be, by unknown supernatural powers, it was deemed a perilous thing to dabble in matters which were beyond human ken. All that was safe for us to know had been explicitly

laid down in Holy Writ. It was, therefore, only to court disaster to investigate the so-called laws of nature. In 1484 a papal bull was issued in which it was stated that storms and plagues were the work of witchcraft in league with diabolical agency. It would have been strange indeed if science in any form worthy of the name had survived under such conditions, and the wonder is that it should have revived amid the obstructions which the Church offered. It is notorious that Greek enquiry into nature ceased to advance as Christianity became powerful. The causes of its decline are indeed complex and not a little obscure. But certainly the social and intellectual conditions of the middle ages were not favourable to the disinterested investigation of nature. It would be an over-statement however, to affirm that scientific enquiry was wholly quenched during this period. Writers like Draper and Lecky somewhat exaggerate the effects of religious dogmatism. Not a few of the clergy themselves were deeply interested in physical problems. The splendid acquirements of the great Dominican, Albertus Magnus, are unduly slighted by Draper, and not even mentioned by Lecky.[1] Humboldt places him alongside of Roger Bacon of the thirteenth century and Francis Bacon of the sixteenth, as one of the pioneers of experimental science.

II

With the Renaissance there came a measure of relief, and a reaction set in against ecclesiastical ascendancy. Man became aware of his individuality and began to reassert his powers of reasoning. The re-

[1] Cf. Lecky, *Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe*, and Draper's *Intellectual Development of Europe*, vol. ii. pp. 116-153.

discovery of the ancient classics and the revival of the study of Aristotle, lifted the veil of credulity and ignorance from the world of nature. The opening up of new parts of the earth, the political changes which came over Europe consequent on the passing of Papal world-dominion, the invention of printing, the rise of trade and growth of international commerce—all tended to produce new ideas and to prepare men's minds for the acceptance of a more rational explanation of the universe than that favoured by mediæval ecclesiasticism.

But the most powerful influence in modifying the attitude of religion towards scientific investigation was exerted by the Reformation. It would be a mistake to attribute to the Protestant leaders any direct sympathy with natural research or to represent the New Faith as the patron of science. If it was a pioneer in the realm of knowledge, it was so in an unconscious way, building better than it knew. The claim of the right of private judgment, which was the keynote of Protestantism, involved the principle of free enquiry. Liberty in one sphere opened the way for liberty in other spheres. What the Reformation actually accomplished was to bring about political and social conditions under which liberty of thought was ultimately secured.[1] The early reformers were as little disposed as their opponents to tolerate views different from their own. But their repudiation of the authority of Rome served the cause of freedom in two respects. It made the Bible an open book accessible to all: and it tended to encourage the spirit of independent study. Protestantism, by its very nature, developed points of contact with the Renaissance, and many of the adherents of the new faith were enthusiasts for humanistic study.

[1] Cf. Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress*, p. 156.

Moreover, in spite of its emphasis upon faith, it did much to intellectualize religion and indirectly to promote scholarly methods. Hence, if Protestantism did not at first actually welcome science, it gradually prepared the way for a wider outlook upon the world. From the time of Locke and Leibnitz there was a tendency to combine speculative and scientific results with sacred ideas, thus securing for the nations which accepted the Reformed Religion a position of superiority in modern thought. The significant fact is that Protestantism contains within it the principle of development. Its vitality is revealed in its power, inherent in its very nature, of adapting itself to new conditions of knowledge, and incorporating in its theology all facts of nature and forms of truth as parts of one progressively unfolding revelation.

During the centuries that followed the Reformation the conflict still raged, but science persistently held its ground. And though the Catholic Church continued to fulminate against the champions of discovery mediæval prejudices died down, and had almost vanished with the beginning of the eighteenth century.

It is no part of our plan to narrate the history of physical science. It is only necessary to note the outstanding landmarks in its progress in order to realize the stupendous revolution it has gradually effected in man's conception of the universe.

Copernicus (1473-1543), the founder of modern astronomy, was the first to startle the world in its slumber of self-complacent ignorance by proving that the sun and not the earth, as was assumed, is the centre of our celestial system ; and that, instead of the earth being stationary, as the Ptolemaic theory represented, it and all the lesser planets are moving in regular and calculable circuits round the solar orb.

For thirty-six years he meditated upon the problem ere he ventured to publish his 'hypothesis,' as Osiander, who edited his work, *De Revolutionibus Orbium*, called it in deference to the prejudices of the Church. It is pathetic to read that the aged astronomer did not live to see the fruits of his labours. The book reached him on the very day of his death, and it was only granted him to touch with his hands the priceless legacy which his mind bequeathed to mankind. Many years were to elapse before the discovery was to find acceptance. By both sections of the Church the theory was denounced: and even from men of science it received but little support. Among his adherents in the sixteenth century was the Italian philosopher, Bruno, who became a martyr for his scientific faith. It is somewhat disappointing to learn that Francis Bacon, the Father of Physical Science in Britain, repudiated the achievement of Copernicus. But if others failed him, there were those hardly less renowned than himself—Tycho Brahe, Kepler and Galileo—who splendidly vindicated his discovery. Galileo stands as the compeer of Copernicus, and shares with him the honour of converting the world to the new system of astronomy. The story of Galileo belongs also to the romance of science. Though he escaped the actual fate of Bruno, he suffered greatly for his beliefs, and finally at the age of seventy-eight, blind and deaf, and poor, died a prisoner of the Inquisition. His works were placed on the Index of Prohibited Books, where they actually remained till 1835.

The Copernican conception of the universe had necessarily far-reaching effects upon theology. A theory which demonstrated that the earth, once regarded as the centre of the universe and the focus of all human and divine influences, was but one of myriads

of whirling specks of matter in space, was apt to dissipate for ever man's sense of his own earthly importance, and to cast doubts upon his ultimate destiny. How, it was asked, can the inhabitants of a planet, so small and insignificant as the earth is, be the objects of divine care or of special revelation such as the Christian religion affirms? Must not the Copernican theory displace the entire scheme of supernaturalism?

But eventually the new theory reacted in the opposite way. So far from shaking the foundations of religious belief it tended to strengthen them. As time wore on the very contrast between the insignificance of man's terrestrial home and the immensity of the physical universe, accentuated spiritual values. Magnitude, it was argued, is not the highest measure of value. God estimates not by bulk but by fitness, and grades the objects of his solicitude according to their moral potencies rather than their physical dimensions. The real significance of man depends not upon his position as a material entity in space and time, but upon his affinity with God and his progressive acquirement of those mental and spiritual qualities which are held to be of the very essence of the Deity.

Notwithstanding the trumpet voice of Bacon summoning his countrymen to the study of nature, the interest in physical science was later to awaken in England than in other countries of Europe. Only two discoveries of real value—terrestrial magnetism by Gilbert, and the circulation of the blood by Harvey—stand to the credit of Britain before the Restoration. The energies of the age were absorbed in political and theological strife. After the Civil War, however, men's minds turned to the things of nature, and by the middle of the seventeenth century a group of students

began to direct their thoughts to what was then called the 'New Philosophy.' Poets, courtiers, statesmen, were seized with scientific fervour, and under the patronage of the King the famous 'Royal Society' was established—an event which marks the beginning of British science, destined to play so great a *rôle* in the history of the world. Undoubtedly the greatest name in this or, indeed, any period, is that of Isaac Newton. Born in 1642, he inaugurated the new age. He was one of the foremost mathematical geniuses the world has produced. His life is the record of a succession of brilliant physical and astronomical discoveries, which followed upon the new application of mathematics to the problems of mechanics. But all other successes are cast into the shade by the enunciation of the 'law of gravitation'. In his immortal work, *The Principia,* not published till twenty years after his earliest discovery was made, he announced to the world a new theory of the universe Galileo had demonstrated by experiments on the leaning Tower of Pisa, that the velocity of falling bodies is independent of their weight. But up till the time of Newton only vague surmises existed regarding the influence of the earth's attraction, and the idea prevailed that all motion could be maintained only by the renewed application of external force. Newton put beyond doubt the fact that the whole physical universe is governed by one law—that the fall of an apple and the motion of a planet are effects of the same cause.

It is not too much to say that Newton transformed the entire theological conception of the age. At one stroke he substituted the idea of law for caprice. The common consciousness, prior to his time, regarded the world as held together by an arbitrary fiat of the Almighty. The earth was regarded as the scene of

chance occurrences, and the whole trend of religious thought disposed men to look for divine operation in the abnormal and strange rather than in the ordinary processes of nature. The findings of Newton dissipated the magical view of the world. Silently and almost imperceptibly the new truth took possession of thought. Within half a century the law of gravity was a commonplace. The clergy as well as the laity accepted it as an established fact. It was acclaimed as the clue to every problem of philosophy. It invaded the domain of theology, and it was assumed that the same mathematical precision attainable in physical Science would prevail also in regard to religious truth. The Rationalism of the eighteenth century was the outcome of this spirit. The English Deists and French Encyclopædists were obsessed by the idea of Universal Law. Locke, not less than La Mettrie, Clarke and Toland, as well as Voltaire and Diderot, pursued the same method and exalted the same ideal—a rational and orderly scheme of the spiritual world as comprehensive and logically exact as the Newtonian law of gravitation.

III

No better proof of the altered relations of Science and Religion is afforded than the attitude of the Church to the Newtonian theory. The era of persecution was past. The period of independence had come. Attempts were made on both sides at reconciliation. The eighteenth century was chiefly notable because it encouraged men to trust their own reason. The nineteenth century has more than confirmed the wisdom of its predecessor by yielding a knowledge of physical phenomena which has both changed the material conditions of civilized

life and greatly modified the current conceptions of human existence.

The practical and utilitarian character of science in Britain, at least from this time, becomes apparent. Only a passing reference can be made to the wonderful series of inventions and mechanical contrivances which facilitated the industrial revolution in England and did so much to create the altered conditions in the social life of all civilized communities. Speaking generally, these inventions may be summed up as the introduction of machinery, or the substitution of mechanical for hand labour. "Man," says Carlyle, "is a tool-making animal." It would be a mistake to suppose that in earlier ages no attempt had been made to spare labour and increase its results by artificial means. Wind and water were utilized in primitive times: and the wheel, the lever, and the wedge were simple but effective means of enabling man to extend his powers and perform tasks greatly beyond the strength of individual bodily effort. While all mechanical contrivances can be regarded as the developments of these primary agents, it may be safely affirmed that almost until our own age man was the drudge and not the master of nature. Nothing marks the advance of mankind so much as tool-making. But that is just because in the improvement of tools the distinctive element is 'thought.' The history of any flint implement reveals the fact that 'mind' is behind the constructive act. At the root and inception of every labour-saving instrument, there is the same creative power at work—the element of thought or mind, which is the distinctive feature of man and the secret of his progressive mastery of nature.

It is beyond our purpose to dwell at length upon the engineering skill which covered England with a network

of canals, and built bridges, harbours and docks; extracted coal and mineral from the bowels of the earth, bringing into use a new form of fuel at a time when the country was largely denuded of its timber: treated iron-ore, making that metal the material and working instrument of all modern labour: contrived the spinning-wheel, and the power-loom, which gave a remarkable impulse to the cotton industry and thus raised Britain into the greatest industrial country of the world.

But the invention which more than all others brought the resources of nature to the profitable service of man, and changed the whole character of trade, was the introduction of the steam-engine as a motive force. But for the timely appliance of this new power many of the other enterprises mentioned would have been comparatively unproductive. Though the expansive power of steam was known to the ancients and was experimented upon from time to time, it was not until the year 1765 that the Scotchman, James Watt, achieved the honour of bringing all previous attempts to a successful issue.

The application of the steam-engine to transport was the most significant extension of Watt's machine. He himself conceived the idea of a steam locomotive, but it was not until 1825, after several partial successes, that George Stephenson finally made the idea practicable. England, therefore, was the pioneer of the railway as she had been of the steam-engine. By 1840 nearly every civilized country had adopted this method of land conveyance. Transport by water had been from the earliest days as important as that by land. And once the idea was grasped, river and ocean transport by steam made quicker progress than that by land. As early as 1812 Henry Bell's *Comet* began

its regular service upon the Clyde. As a means of locomotion by water and land, the steam-engine has introduced factors into civilized life which have been incomparable in their results. It has created a community of interests throughout the world. It has stimulated a wealth of ideas in every department of life, enlarging the mental horizon of mankind, and organizing anew the whole economy of society. Next to steam locomotion, the telegraph and all the appliances dependent upon the use of electricity have been probably the most potent agency in promoting the unification of the world. About the year 1836, telegraph wires were erected, and by means of a current of electricity it was possible to transmit through space intelligible signs. Ocean cables soon followed, and by the inventive genius, skill and perseverance of Lord Kelvin, the old and new world were linked as one, and messages were flashed from continent to continent swifter than the flight of the swiftest bird. But probably the greatest triumph of all belongs to our day, and deserves here to be chronicled. In the newspapers of June 16, 1919, we read that "the first non-stop Atlantic flight has been successfully accomplished. The Vickers-Vimy Aeroplane, piloted by Captain Alcock and navigated by Lieutenant Brown, left St. John's, Newfoundland, at 4.13 P.M. on Saturday, and landed at Clifton (County Galway) at 8.40 yesterday. The flight was therefore accomplished in 16 hours, 27 minutes." A few weeks later, the huge air-ship, R34, built on the Clyde, made the voyage from Scotland to America, and again from America to England; the time of the return journey was about 75 hours. No commentary is required. Visions of immense possibilities are breaking forth: and the command of the air is likely to effect revolutions in every

department of human life not less radical than those produced by the introduction of steam and electricity.

The inventions so far considered, were in the main, applications of the principles of physical and mechanical science to the utilities of life. They exemplify the bringing of abstract thought to bear upon the existing forces of nature and adapting them to human requirements. The machine is an embodiment of man's mind projected into space, which enables him to extend his dominion over the earth and work out his will more widely and effectively than his own bodily powers could do.

The theoretic sciences as pursued in modern times have not been without their practical bearings, but their immediate object has been truth for its own sake. Before the end of the eighteenth century, one great fact was observed which has become the basis of great discoveries in chemical and other science. This was the idea of the conservation of matter, which arose from the analysis of the air. The experiments of Lavoisier, Carnot, Mayer and Joule, established the law of equivalence of heat and work. In 1847, their results were summed up and described in a paper read in Berlin, on the "Conservation of Energy," by Helmholtz. Thus, as has been remarked, the middle of the century saw the establishment of the greatest generalization of science, extended now beyond the limits of inanimate nature to all kinds of energy.[1] The later work of Clerk Maxwell, by which the equivalence of heat, light and electricity has been further elucidated, and the lengths of the waves of motion in such cases, exactly calculated, has confirmed the truth of this great conception, and brought within the service of

[1] See Marvin, *The Century of Hope*, p. 127.

man many of the hitherto intractable potencies of the physical world. Of the wonderful developments which have taken place in chemical and electrical sciences, and of their innumerable and ever-increasing applications to all forms of human activity, it would be impossible within our limits to speak. The resources of the material world seem almost illimitable, and even yet our knowledge of the mysterious power which resides in the properties of gases, and their chemical analysis and synthesis, is still in its infancy. Arising out of these recent investigations, the theory of radio-activity with its far-reaching suggestion of dynamic possibilities is engaging the attention of scientists. Once again the notion of universal transmutation which floated before the imagination of mediæval alchemists is attracting the modern mind; while the dream of the ancients of a common basis of energy, and the tapping of an almost inexhaustible supply of power is, in the opinion of some, not beyond the possibility of science. But whatever the answer to that question may be, "the fact that man has, within the last hundred and fifty years, multiplied his resources a thousandfold, brought land and water and air, and the hidden stores of nature into subjection to him, is a stupendous one." [1] Science is the great unifier of nations. In all countries where industry has been organised and developed by scientific enterprise, society has immensely gained in sympathy of interest, fellowship and inter-dependence. It dare not be forgotten, however, that science has sometimes been employed to divide rather than unite mankind, and invention has been as potent in devising means of destroying the life and work of man as it has been in protecting and promoting them.

[1] *Marvin*, p. 132.

The one great fact that is impressed upon us to-day is the unity and inter-relation of the sciences, and the consequent concentration of thought upon the cosmical problem. The conception of the unity of the universe, of one fundamental principle underlying all the forces and phenomena of being, is strenuously canvassed. The quest for unity is natural to man, and scientists have been ever restive under the multiplicity of entities. But theology cannot renounce its right to speak on a question which really transcends the province of science and repudiate the assumption of a naturalistic monism inconsistent with the possibility of a spiritual interpretation of life. If the recent naturalistic pronouncements of Science have no other effect, they have at least done religion the service of focussing attention upon some neglected aspects of experience and forced Christian thought to face the fundamental question of the relation of 'causal nexus' and divine Revelation. It is true a dualistic explanation of the world can as little satisfy religion as science. The belief that the world is a rational system is involved in the very nature of intelligence itself. But the unity for which modern theology and idealistic philosophy contend, is one which is not destroyed, but enriched by difference and variety. "To say that there is a universal reign of law and that nothing happens without a cause, is by no means to say that there is one kind of law and one kind of cause for everything. The world is not a congeries of things, all on the same level. It is more fitly described as a hierarchy in which the lower orders of being are both pre-supposed and explained by the higher." [1]

[1] Edward Caird, *Evolution of Religion*, vol. i. p. 6.

IV

The quest for Unity has found characteristic expression and support in the greatest scientific theory of the age—*the theory of Evolution.* The idea is not a new one. But the full perception of its value as a key to the history of man and the world belongs to our own era. Montesquieu, Lessing, Herder, Schelling, Hegel and Comte applied the principle with considerable philosophical insight to political and religious history; Goethe was one of the earliest to apply it to plant life, while Hutton and Lyell were among the pioneers of development in relation to geological problems. As a theory of the origin of life it is little more than half a century old. Advanced by Charles Darwin in his work, the *Origin of Species,* in 1859, it was hailed with enthusiasm by the scientific world; and though at first treated with suspicion and even hostility by the champions of orthodoxy, it is now generally accepted by all speculative and scientific writers as the principle which affords the most satisfactory clue to problems of biology. The significance of Darwinism lies in the fact that the author has brought the realm of organic life, as previous science had brought the inorganic world, under the reign of natural law, and has sought to account for the processes of life without reference to supernatural agency. Darwin endeavours to show that not only does the evolution of species proceed in a regular and natural way from lower to higher, but also that partly by the law of the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence, and partly by adaptation to environment, new variations and types have been evolved, while special organs and habits tending to the preservation of the individual or species, under the

conditions of life in which it has been placed, have been gradually formed. Since more individuals of all kinds come into the world than it can support, those which have some slight advantage have the best chance of surviving, while the weaker variations, that is, those not so well adapted to their circumstances, succumb. These variations, which survival in the fight for life reveals, are transmitted to their offspring, and thus afford a basis of advancement which, in the process of ages, results in the highly specialized forms we witness to-day. Thus, the whole aspect of the organic world is altered. The old static view of life gives place to the evolutionary. Instead of a number of simultaneous beginnings, which was formerly assumed, we discern a continuous stream of process in which each step is connected with the foregoing by a series of minute and hardly perceptible changes. Such is a bald account of the theory of Evolution which, first established by Darwin, has been elaborated by a large body of naturalists. While there is a general consensus of view as to the main principle, a considerable diversity of opinion exists regarding the factors which promote variation of species. Darwin himself laid stress upon natural selection, and somewhat underrated the environmental condition. Among modern writers the tendency is to put the main emphasis partly upon 'organism,' partly on function, and partly on environment, giving significance more or less pronounced to all three elements as the decisive factors in the process.[1]

Evolution, irrespective of these details, is now acknowledged to be the farthest reach—the copestone and completion of the entire earlier work of scientific enquiry. It is the boldest attempt that has

[1] *Cf.* Von Baer, *History of Evolution*, and also J. A. Thomson, *Science in the Nineteenth Century*.

yet been made to build up the world anew and comprehend the structure of life under the dominant idea of historical growth. Its main principles have already captured and revolutionized every department of thought. If theology can come to terms with this theory and admit that there is nothing in its general contentions subversive of the divine origin of the world and a spiritual interpretation of life, it need not be unduly alarmed at the results which physical science claims to have reached in other spheres of research.

The hostility with which the theory was first met has largely passed away, and theologians are not only ready to accept it as an explanation of the phenomena of nature, but are now in general agreement that the conception of historical development throws light upon the progress of society and the origin and growth of religion itself. It is even acknowledged to be a distinctly Christian idea.[1] Though the word does not occur in Scripture, the notion is prominent in the New Testament. It underlies much of our Lord's parabolic teaching. It is presupposed in the unfolding drama of Jewish history. Jesus speaks of his own ethical doctrine as the fulfilment of that which was potentially contained in the Jewish Law : and where, to name no other parable, he represents the corn and wheat growing and multiplying by dying, he is illustrating the genesis and essence of Christianity under the idea of development. Similarly, St. Paul employs the same conception in his account of the gradual preparation of the Jewish and Gentile world for the advent of Christ in the fulness of the times, and indeed seems to visualize the whole process of creation, both in its natural and spiritual aspects, in terms of what would now be called

[1] See Edward Caird, *Evolution of Religion*, vol. i.

a philosophy of evolution. The religious problem of the present day is largely determined by the fact that the modern mind in its attempt to understand life, starts from the platform of natural science. Men of education think and speak to-day in the language of evolution. It is hard to overstate the value to humanity of this long training in scientific method and technical application. It has shaped every discipline, brought order into our ideas. It has helped us to differentiate the essential from the accidental, and generally has aided the mind to a more correct appraisement of values. Nor is it without an ethical significance for mankind. Not only has it enhanced our scope of wonder and lifted the common thought of man to a contemplation of the Cosmic Unity and grandeur of creation, but in many practical ways it has encouraged sincerity, veracity, loyalty to truth, and a wider toleration and respect for the variety of thought and life which exists.

But while the general idea of Evolutionary Science has readily found acceptance, and is allowed to have greatly enriched the religious and moral view of life and history, difficulties, if not doubts, emerge when we come to deal with the details of the Darwinian theory.

In the *Descent of Man*, published in 1871, Darwin extended his argument to the origin of the human species. He did not believe that his theory encroached upon the theistic field or in any way tended to subvert the Christian faith. Towards the end of the book he says, " I am aware that the conclusions arrived at in this work will be denounced by some as highly irreligious, but he who thus denounces them is bound to show why it is more irreligious to explain the origin of man as a distinct species of descent from some

lower forms, through the laws of variation and natural selection, than to explain the birth of the individual through the laws of ordinary reproduction. The birth both of the species and of the individual are equally parts of that grand sequel of events which our minds refuse to accept as the result of blind chance." [1] Few theologians would now dissent from this inference. Though Paley's idea of an external Creator is no longer tenable, evolution does not contradict the notion of design nor exclude the thought of a divine ruler. So far indeed from diminishing, the theory rather enhances, the wonder of the universe, and suggests a higher conception of God and His relation to man than is afforded by the mechanical view of Creation. It would be strange, however, if a theory so complex and bristling with difficulties offered no points of collision with traditional Christianity. There are, at least, three features of the Darwinian System, as originally stated, which have evoked considerable criticism and require some modification before they can be completely harmonized with Christian truth.

1. The first concerns the problem of *Continuity*. If the law of 'causal sequence' could be absolutely proved as the unalterable and all-sufficient law of life, as Haeckel and others of his school maintain, it is difficult to see how any form of supernatural revelation can any longer be accepted. But it has by no means been proved. Darwin himself was forced to concede that there have been what, since his time, have been called 'gaps' in the evolutionary process. While he confesses his inability to account, not only for the origin of life but also for the first beginnings of rational thought, Wallace excludes from the process altogether the higher mental and moral powers of man. The

[1] *Descent of Man*, vol. ii. p. 395.

later evolutionists have become more moderate in their claims. The purely naturalistic theory, still represented by Haeckel and Weissmann, is giving place at the present time to a more spiritualistic interpretation.[1] And it is significant that Driesch, one of the latest exponents of the theory, though he began his researches from the standpoint of Haeckel, now denies the mechanical theory of development and, in a most determined way repudiates his own earlier published views on the subject. In his last work, *The Soul*, he endeavours to show the impossibility of maintaining a merely mechanical theory of life, not only in the region of vital processes generally, but more particularly in the sphere of human behaviour and voluntary action. Driesch and others of the Modern School now contend for the 'Autonomy of the Spirit,' and the pre-eminence and creative power of Consciousness. 'Gaps' remain which scientific investigation is unable to bridge, and the "Riddle of the Universe" has not been solved at the mere dictum of Haeckel. Naturalism is confronted with at least three 'breaks' in the 'causal nexus.' The first is revealed at the introduction of life; the second at the appearance of consciousness; while the third meets us in the manifestation of the higher forms of rational, moral and religious activity.

2. The second difficulty arises in connection with the most characteristic feature of Darwinism—the *hypothesis of natural selection.* Without entering upon the question so much debated, of the "all-sufficiency of natural selection, two observations may be made. (1) Even the champions of the Selective theory are forced to admit that the struggle for existence can of itself *create no new characters*, no higher combinations of vital elements. Life can only use what is

[1] Cf. Otto, *Naturalism and Religion.*

already given, selecting or eliminating among the wealth of possibilities what is offered. In the fine phrase of Otto, "the struggle for existence is only the steel which strikes the spark from the flint." [1] If we keep this in mind many of the elements in the theory which seemed most ominous and alarming to the religious mind lose half their terrors. (2) It may be further remarked that the phrase, 'Survival of the fittest,' is now regarded by evolutionists themselves as highly ambiguous. We naturally ask, the fittest for what? If we have regard to the higher values of life, its moral and spiritual ends, the fittest physically is not necessarily the fittest mentally or morally. It is frequently the sickly, the delicate, the sensitive, the individuals least able to contend in the physical struggle of the world, which, in the higher phases of life, contribute most to the real wealth and advancement of mankind. Moreover, modern thought is beginning to discover that the 'struggle of life' is not the final clue to survival, even among the lower forms of existence. And the higher we rise in the evolutionary process there is evidence of another law, a law of co-operation, known as *Symbiosis*. In the web of life many examples of mutual co-operation and reciprocal benefit are to be found. Darwin himself has pointed out not a few instances of co-action and service. Insects serve flowers, flowers serve insects. Animal life is dependent on vegetable life. The natural is the basis of the spiritual: and in nature, as in the higher phases of human existence, there are features of sympathy, mutual dependence, interrelationship, which can be only expressed in the phrase, 'dying to live.' Instead of the 'fiercely raging struggle' for existence which earlier evolutionists picture, and the intense individualism and selfishness

[1] *Op cit.* p. 158.

which is supposed to dominate the world, another view is gaining ground, viz., that which looks upon nature as a gigantic system of co-operation, in which each individual or each species lives not for self alone but for the good of others, and finds its own goal or 'good' in seeking that of those dependent on it. It is this view which Professor Drummond accentuates in his suggestive book, *The Ascent of Man*, and though he probably exaggerates the altruistic idea, there is no doubt that a more comprehensive survey of the facts of existence reveals the presence of this tendency in the world as contributory to the upward progress of life. There is a principle of mutual service and co-partnery, and of self-sacrifice, even, abounding in nature, which suggests that the final decisions and results of life do not depend on rivalry and conflict, even in the lower phases of being, but on co-operation and mutual help of individuals, which only find their *raison d'être* as they are parts of a larger organism, members of a greater complex whole.

3. The third difficulty relates, therefore, to the idea of *purpose*. The notion of 'indefinite and fortuitous variations,' at first favoured by Darwin, is yielding to the idea of 'definite teleological aims.' It is here that the exponents of mechanical evolution part company with the advocates of spiritual interpretation. When Darwin sought to show that evolution can be realized only through purely natural causes, his doctrine was first interpreted as a denial of teleology. But even on Darwin's own showing, the world of life is full of what is *de facto* purposive. "Every single living being is a miracle of inexhaustible *adaptation to ends*." Whence come these ends? "They are," says Darwin, "unsought and unintended products" which come about 'of themselves.' To eliminate purpose and to

introduce purely naturalistic principles, or " principles of chance "—understanding by ' chance ' that which is opposed not to necessity but to plan—may be regarded as the earliest aim of the Darwinian theory. But the author soon discovered that he could not work out his theory in a satisfactory way without the assumption of plan or purpose. We are thus brought right up against the fundamental question—the question which science, by its very nature, in virtue of its principle of abstraction, is not in a position to answer. It is the question of the controlling force of evolution—the source and secret of life.

It is here that religious thought has a right to put its own interpretation on the facts which science reveals. The laws of variation, stimulus and reaction, may well help to illumine the doctrine of design and give a sense of order, stability and rationality to the world. But stripped of the idea of purpose, they are wholly meaningless. Rightly considered, Evolution, so far from eliminating the teleological idea, gives to it a deeper and more vital truth ; and as Mr. Balfour has finely shown, invests the conception of Theistic Design with a grandeur and persuasiveness which never came within the purview of the Deists of the eighteenth century.[1] It is, in short, as modern thinkers are coming to see, the teleological element in Evolution that is the nerve of the theory ; and it is the existence of thought, of a creative immanent mind working in and through ' the one increasing purpose ' that gives to Evolution its real significance.

Between science and religion, whose relations this chapter has attempted to trace, there is manifestly to-day a better understanding than formerly. While

[1] Cf. Gifford Lectures, *Humanism and Theism.*

theology has become less dogmatic and more ready to accept facts, science has grown more modest in its pretensions. It has come to admit that there are mysteries of the spirit with which it is not its province to deal. The old conflict is waning, and a better temper on both sides prevails. In its own domain science is sovereign. But not less authoritative is religion in its proper sphere. A mere truce or compromise is futile. Peace can only come when men everywhere recognise that nature and revelation are, after all, but diverse aspects of the same truth. The universe which Science is gradually unfolding to us is one with the universe disclosed to us in and through the religious consciousness of man. It is one and the same God who is revealing Himself in both spheres. Scientific research must inevitably react upon theological ideas, deepening their meaning and widening their range. But on the other hand religious truth is transforming scientific facts and investing them with richer values. The man of Science, not less than the man of religion is, as the devout astronomer Kepler said, "thinking God's thoughts after Him," praying that he may "find in his own soul the God whom he discovered everywhere without." The wonderful triumph of Science in our time, so far from diminishing the glory of revelation, is only enlarging its scope. It is proving to man that God is living and working continually, as much in the findings of the naturalist of to-day as in the prophets of yesterday.

The central issue has come to be, whether a naturalistic interpretation of reality shall prevail—whether, in short, there is room in life for the autonomy of the spirit, for the 'miracle of the will,' for novelty and initiative on the part of man. How the evolution of reality as a whole is to be interpreted depends ultimately

upon whether we recognise in spiritual life a new impulse of being, or whether we see in it nothing more than a prolongation of nature. Does the higher rise as mere product of the lower ? Or is it a manifestation of a Power for which nature cannot account ?

The Spiritual must be recognised as something unique, ever new and original, breaking in from above upon nature, revealing its meanings and potencies, and disclosing the ultimate principle of life itself. In no other terms can we explain the entrance of the Christ into the world, and only in the light of the sovereign fact of Christ can the problems of Science and of theology be truthfully read and interpreted.

CHAPTER X

THE RELIGIOUS PROBLEM AS AFFECTED BY LITERATURE (CONTINENTAL)

In the foregoing chapters some account has been given of the bearing of Philosophy and Science upon the religious problem. But there still remains an important factor separate from, but not wholly unrelated to, these movements. This may be described generally as the literary factor. Less direct than that of philosophic and scientific thought, the influence of poetry and imaginative art has been even more potent in expressing and shaping the spiritual life of the world. For, as Wordsworth has said, "Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is on the countenance of all Science." Wordsworth thus makes poetry "the counterpart and coadjutor of Philosophy." "In the case of the greatest poets we are driven to ask," says a modern writer, "what was their philosophy."[1] The poet, like the philosopher, is seeking the unity and life which are concealed within the outward mechanism of the world, and both are in search of a truth deeper than that which is the object of science. When Matthew Arnold affirms that "poetry is at bottom a criticism of life," he is expressing in other words the same truth.[2] He

[1] Edward Caird, *Essays on Literature.*

[2] See M. Arnold, *Introductory Essay to Poems of Wordsworth.*

means that poetry discloses a new and higher standard and touchstone of life : it brings to bear upon human purposes the power of great and beautiful ideas. This has been the vocation of the world's greatest masters in literature. It is the distinctive note of Aeschylus and Plato, of Dante and Goethe, of Shakespeare and Milton. Inhaling the atmosphere of their age and uttering in impassioned strain their inmost thoughts, the poets of the race have not only reflected the spiritual significance of their time, but have become also the bearers of new prophetic visions and ideas which are big with meaning for after ages. Every great poem is always something more than a record : it is a new voyage and adventure into unknown and unplumbed reaches of thought.

It is this spirit of spontaneity and initiative which gives to poetic literature its unique fitness to be the exponent and minister of religion. Poetry and religion have a strong natural kinship. They were cradled together in the infancy of man. They have a common parentage and are fed and fostered by the same human instincts and yearnings. They are the twin products of that primary sense of wonder which lies at the basis of man's spiritual history. Religion finds its earliest utterance in song. And poetry will always abide as the truest language of the spirit.

The very framework even of the greatest imaginative works depends upon certain religious ideas. The *Iliad* is based upon Olympian Mythology. The *Aeneid* presupposes the intervention of the gods in the affairs of men. The *Divina Commedia* assumes the Mediæval Conception of Christianity, while *Paradise Lost* is pervaded by the Puritan interpretation of Scripture.[1] Consciously or unconsciously, the poets of all time

[1] See *The Religious Spirit in the Poets*, by W. Boyd Carpenter.

reflect the religious problems which agitate men's minds from age to age.

In seeking to depict the influence of literature upon religious thought, it will not be possible to do more than single out a few of the more significant examples. Reserving for another chapter the religious element in English Poetry, we shall confine ourselves here to the spiritual message of some of the greater literary efforts of Europe.

I

If we take Dante as our starting-point, it is because no single literary work has more effectively moulded history or more profoundly touched the religious thought of modern times than the *Divina Commedia*. It is an example, 'par excellence,' of our thesis. Dante is the last outpost of the Middle Ages. Standing on the verge of the old and the new world he is the quintessence of the Renaissance. Casting a look back and a look forward, it is his mission to bring "the mediæval spirit to a consciousness of itself, and so carry it beyond itself." [1] He affords a striking instance of the truth that a great thinker is something more than the mere product of his time and is capable of making the whole content of his age the expression of a personality which transcends it. In this sense Dante may be said to be the last of the ancients and the first of the moderns. While the world of thought he depicts is that of the Mediæval Church, he so refashions its contents by the force of his imaginative spirit that the accidents and particulars fall away and it becomes the embodiment of a universal kingdom in which all men of every age may discern their ideal life.

[1] See Caird, *op. cit. Essay on Dante.*

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Especially is this true, as has been pointed out in the essay from which we have already quoted, of the three great contrasts or contradictions which characterize Mediæval religion—the antagonism between this world and the next, between faith and reason, and finally between the natural and the spiritual, or asceticism and self-affirmation. The poet takes us on that eternal pilgrimage, which must be made by all men who are urged forward by the quest of the good, a pilgrimage which is really an ascent, through stern negation, to blissful affirmation; and shows us in the end that faith and justice and love are really one, and that while the Spiritual life is the goal, it must be based upon, and can only be realised by, the transfiguration of the natural. Dante exalts the contemplative life, as was meet for a loyal son of the Church of his day; he gives it its widest connotation, identifying it with the love of God. It was for him but another name for religion which does not take a man out of the world; but, while lifting him above its vanities and futilities, summons him, in devotion to God, to its struggles and tasks. In his love and adoration of Beatrice, the embodiment, in human form, of all that is divinely beautiful, Dante may be said to have counteracted the tendency of his age to divorce the divine and the human and thus to reaffirm "the positive side of Christianity as against the over-emphasis which the Middle Ages laid upon its negative side." [1]

II

Passing over the other great writers and artists of the Italian Renaissance, Leonardo da Vinci, one of the

[1] *Op. cit.*

most famous men of history, the painter of the greatest picture in the world, "The Last Supper," but prominent also in literature and science and philosophy; and Michelangelo, hardly less renowned, happily named "the prophet of the Renaissance;" and Petrarch, Ariosto, Tasso, and the poets of Spain, Calderon and De Vega—men of high religious rapture, whose poems and works of art reflect the faith and Romanticism of their age—we must touch for a little upon the Early Writers of France. French literature, especially of the seventeenth century, has been usually regarded as the most brilliant in Europe. In no other have the distinguishing characteristics of French genius,—sequence of ideas, lucidity of style and grace of diction—been so conspicuous. Three names appear so continuously throughout the century that a kind of authentic rank may be assigned to them.[1] These are Descartes, in the realm of pure thought, Montaigne in the domain of morals, and Malherbe in the sphere of literary criticism. In illustration of this we find the two chief representatives of Catholicism, the two most deeply religious men of their age, Pascal and Bossuet—no inconsiderable exponents of thought and style—busy refuting the principles of Descartes and Montaigne. Montaigne has been called the literary father confessor of France. Descartes, also a moralist, gave to the seventeenth century those qualities—sense of order and sequence of ideas,—which Montaigne lacked; and as teacher in this respect of Bourdaloue, Boileau, and even of Racine and Molière, as well as Malebranche, was the forerunner on the path which the French intellect was to travel.

Over the classical writers of the dramatic school, Corneille and the famous "four friends," Boileau

[1] Cf. Acton's *Cambridge History*.

La Fontaine, Racine and Molière, one would fain linger. Great as these authors were as moral forces, their influence would have been immensely greater had their genius not been fettered by their rigid observance of the "Unities" to which, in their reverence for the models of antiquity, they clung with abject devotion. The France of this period was acclaimed the centre of culture and the literary sovereign of Europe. It was the fountain-head of the great ideas, scientific, political and religious, which were beginning to transform civilization. Corneille, the poet of the doctrine of free-will, the master of tragedy and the subtle delineator of moral character: and Molière, the prince of comedy, castigating the foibles of his age, and in sharp, terse language of delicate irony sparing neither rich nor poor—sounded, though unconsciously, the first notes of the coming revolution. But it is the writers of the next century, the period of the 'Enlightenment,' to whom France owes its world-wide power. It was the age of negations and destructive criticisms. The old social fabric was found wanting, and new voices of dissatisfaction and protest were being raised. But if the period contained within it the germs of revolution, it hid also within its bosom the seeds of renewal. The mouthpiece of this spirit was Voltaire, philosopher and poet, but critic more than either. He was the satirist of hypocrisy and superstition. In prose and verse, in tract and treatise, he poured forth a constant stream of fiery and witty invective against the abuses of Church and State. All theological creeds and political shibboleths encountered his scathing sarcasms. Honesty of conviction compelled him to stop short of complete atheism. The only sort of Deity he appears to have acknowledged was a kind of divine overseer, or moral police force,

whom, if He did not exist, it would be necessary to invent, in order to preserve in society some measure of decency and order.

But if in one aspect Voltaire was the embodiment of negation, in another he was the apostle of a larger affirmation. There was, it must be admitted, a considerable strain of human sympathy in this idol-breaker. He has been often misjudged, and one gladly recognises that recently a reaction towards a juster estimate of the man and his influence has set in.[1] His undying interest in all that concerned mankind and his unflagging efforts in the cause of justice and toleration are features of his work which have not received due consideration. He greatly admired England and learned much from her people. Coming to our country in 1726, he abode three years amongst us, mastering our language and studying our literature. England, therefore, had no little share in making Voltaire what he became. His devotion to Newton and his life-long admiration of Locke are well-known. Among his letters is one to Horace Walpole in 1768, which shows how he resented the charge which had been made against him of disparaging Shakespeare. He claims to have been "the first writer who made Shakespeare known to the French." Indeed, he goes on to say, "before my time no one in France knew anything about English poetry." "I have been your apostle and martyr: truly it is not fair that the English should complain of me." Writers have been accustomed to dwell upon his anti-religionism. But as Augustine Birrell lately reminds us, "in an age of savage war, he alone of the servants of God then extant denounced it." When cruelty in any form raised its head he ruthlessly smote it, and when suffering

[1] As a corrective to the earlier view of Voltaire, see *Voltaire in his Letters*, translated by S. S. G. Tallantyre.

made its tragic appeal he was the first to hasten to its succour. It is well that history should offer a broader view of this man's life and work than has been customary, and bring into greater prominence that aspect of courage, sympathy, and zeal for the advancement of justice and honesty which his letters reveal as a distinctive feature of his character. Voltaire was not the unreasonable revolutionary he is sometimes represented to be. He belonged, in part at least, to the old régime. He hated priests far more than kings, but he would not have hated either could they have learned and practised the principles of charity and toleration.

In Rousseau there appeared at once the complement and completion of the movement which Voltaire had started. Rousseau was a man of rare talent, yet a creature of notorious inconsistencies. He combined the most exalted ideals with an almost unparalleled instability of character. The contrasts of his nature are mirrored in his writings. "No one," says Mr. Lecky, "plunged more recklessly into paradox, or supported his paradoxes with more consummate skill." His revolt against the conventionalities of his day penetrated all classes, revolutionising social distinctions and overturning time-honoured traditions. He protests with equal vehemence against the empty negations of his time. One thought runs through all his works—Civilization is the great evil, the parent of all vices. "Back to Nature" was the cry with which this iconoclast startled Europe, and the gospel which he preached was the simplicity and unspoiled innocence of primitive man. Society, with its creation of property, its coercive labour and fierce competition for wealth, has awakened our selfish instinct and given an incentive to every crime. We must undo history

and begin again and allow man to develop naturally. In his *Emile*, Rousseau sets forth his ideas of education. Let us isolate the child, so that his true nature may unfold freely. "All our first inclinations are legitimate," he says. And again, "the intuitions of feeling afford a light more clear and pure than the light of reason." But while Rousseau would lead us back to a state of nature, he recognises that permanent isolation would be impossible. Social life is necessary for the development and protection of individual rights. In agreement with Hobbes and Locke he would base society on a mutual 'contract,' which will at once conserve and limit freedom for the general good. The individual does not exist for the State. The State exists for the individual. Government must therefore be based on the will of the people, making the rights of individuals the first consideration.

But while his social and democratic views have greatly affected modern political philosophy, the feature of Rousseau's thought which has most interest for the present age is his defence of religion. Here also he seeks to oppose the prevailing atheism of his day by leading the world back to nature, or as he here calls it, to the universal 'sentiment interieur,' the 'conscience' or 'common reason' which is the residuum remaining when we leave out the differences among men. This it is which alone bears witness to God, virtue and immortality. Rousseau is too clever not to know that the appeal to inner feeling is powerless as an argument against those who profess to have no such consciousness. But he denies that there can really be any such who are honest with themselves. Rousseau, it has been said, represents here, in its one-sided individualism, the principle of Protestantism as it was developed by some of the more

pronounced followers of Luther and Calvin. "Christ," says our author, in almost modern language, "is our best witness." The real Jesus is the Jesus of nature and simplicity as we find Him in the unsophisticated picture of the Gospels—a Jesus who has been lost to mankind by being buried under the lumber of ecclesiastical dogma. There again we must undo history and get back to nature, to the origin and fountain-head of our faith.

The task of Rousseau was the reassertion of the primitive right of reason—the principle and criterion of all truth and action within man. But what Rousseau and the advocates of extreme individualism forgot was that the individual consciousness becomes what it is by means of the historical mediation through which it has passed, and that "the Catholic Church itself was a necessary presupposition of Protestantism."[1] Not by sweeping away the labours of the past, but only by learning what experience has taught, and using what our fathers have handed down to us, shall we attain to the fullness and significance of our faith.

Rousseau is "the short abstract and chronicle of his time." "The tragedy of the Revolution which was necessary to the new birth of European civilization, was enacted in his breast ere it passed on to the stage of history." With unclouded optimism and a vision turned towards the future, he sets the task, still unfulfilled in our day, of rediscovering our faith and freedom, not by the way of negation, but by a more positive effort for the reconstruction of religious thought.

Of the contribution of France to the literary assets of the nineteenth century, one name alone, but that surpassed by few in any age or country, must suffice as

[1] Edward Caird, *Literary Essays—Rousseau.*

an example—Victor Hugo. Born in 1802, and dying in 1885, his personality and work are almost coextensive with the century of which he is not the least representative figure. He reveals his modernity in a clearer understanding than those who preceded him, of historical evolution. To him "the historical pageant was the dominant thought; and the future was a vision of democratic freedom and happiness and triumph." [1] There was also in him "a growth of the poets' soul" towards freedom. All his works, but more especially his poems, are essentially autobiographical, reflecting the successive phases of his inner life. The times in which his youth was spent were big with revolution and change, and Hugo's manifesto, "au peuple nouveau, art nouveau," summing up his social and literary mission, was accepted by the youthful contemporaries whom he rallied around him as the watchword for the 'return to reality,' which, originating with Rousseau and elaborated by Chateaubriand and others, was the distinctive feature of the French Romantic School.

His literary career practically began with the production of *Hernani* in 1830, when he fiercely combated the conventional spirit of French literature, and secured the ultimate triumph of literary freedom. But while he became the greatest literary artist of modern France, conspicuous alike as dramatist, historian and novelist, he was not content to be a mere poetical dreamer, but aspired to take an active part in the political destinies of his country, and he became an outstanding figure in the successive stages of France's public history. The inner revolution that was to convert the Catholic royalist into the anti-Catholic republican, may be discerned already in his earlier works. *Les Voix Interi-*

[1] See *The Century of Hope*, by F. S. Marvin, p. 67.

eures and *Les Rayons et les Ombres* reveal the poet's progress towards a more positive religious faith. After the *coup d'état*, in 1852, he became the impassioned champion of democracy, and in *Les Châtiments* he fiercely denounced every form of tyranny and wrong. In a striking poem entitled *Lazarus*, he calls upon the people to rise, as it were, from the dead, and reassert the liberty of which they had been unjustly deprived. In the Epilogue, the exiled poet gives expression to his absolute trust in the moral rule of a righteous God. Victor Hugo is not only the dramatist and leader of France in song, he is one of the greatest of her writers of prose romance. In this aspect he was a disciple of Scott and Goethe. In the latter half of the nineteenth century the novel had become the prevalent type of imaginative literature, and in the treatment of the complexities and problems of modern life Hugo is one of the earliest masters. Of his novels, three at least will doubtless survive as pre-eminent in this class of writing—*Les Misérables, Notre-Dame de Paris*, and *Quatre-Vingt Treize*. But his best and truest title to immortality is after all his poetry. In fervour and energy of purpose, in exaltation of sentiment, in gorgeousness of colouring as in rhythmic music, the range and capacity of his genius is supreme. Victor Hugo has a gospel, a message for our age, and it has brought relief and hope to many a victim of circumstances. His gospel of social redemption is best disclosed in *Les Misérables*. The task before the world is to raise the fallen, as well as the vanquished, to create a new world of felicity. How is it to be done? By enlightening vice and lawlessness, and by bringing to bear upon the guilty the healing influence of pardon. His aim, says Amiel,[1] is "a Christianisation of society, an extension of

[1] *Journal Intime*, p. 90.

charity from the sinner to the condemned criminal, the application to our present life of what the Church applies more readily to the other." It is great and noble, but a little optimistic and Rousseau-like. "It is the Religion and City of Progress: in a word, the Eutopia of the eighteenth century on a great scale." There is here a great deal of generosity mixed with not a little extravagance. Hugo minimises the power and perversity of evil. To him sin is a misfortune, not a rebellion of the heart and will. But with all his exaggerations and dissonances, his lack of measure, and even of taste and sense of humour, his poses and caprices, Victor Hugo was a writer of titanic force—one of the literary geniuses of France. "In his passionate denunciation of tyranny and oppression, in his recognition of the inherent dignity of human nature, together with the sacredness of its primal affections; and in his anticipation of a higher social ideal, based upon truth, justice, faith and love—a true kingdom of Heaven upon earth—as humanity's final goal, Victor Hugo must be regarded as an important factor in carrying on the great work of social amelioration." [1]

III

The sudden outburst of literary productivity in Germany in the eighteenth century is an almost unique phenomenon in the realm of thought. The revival, or shall we say the creation, of German literature, was the cause more than the effect of the political unity to which the country attained at this time. Historians are apt to attribute undue importance to the exploits of arms, and neglect the more spiritual

[1] See a fine estimate in *Poets, the Interpreters of their Age*, by Anna Swanwick, p. 366.

factors which, though less conspicuous, are often more potent. The meaning of the "war of liberation" can hardly be appreciated unless it be read in the light of a previous intellectual enfranchisement. The significance of the renascence of German thought lay in the spiritual enrichment which it brought to the nation's life, and also in her power to contribute elements of incalculable value to civilization. As early as 1727 Gottsched drew attention to the wealth of material which lay in the early history and language of his people. It was Lessing who practically carried out Gottsched's suggestion. But instead of advocating a slavish imitation of French models, he proposed to break away from the cramping restrictions which had so long dominated dramatic composition, and to institute a national poetry after the style of the English writers, whose language and mode of thought were, he considered, more akin to the Teutonic genius. He himself was the earliest dramatist of his country. In *Sara Sampson*, *Emilia Galotti*, and *Nathan der Weise*, he laid the foundations of a native dramatic art which eventually found expression in Goethe and Schiller. By directing attention to English literature, Lessing did not a little to stir afresh the already existing dissatisfaction with the institutions of actual life and to awaken those yearnings for freedom and self-assertion which found utterance in what has been called the 'Sturm und Drang' movement. It was, however, Herder rather than Lessing who grasped the inner meaning of this agitation, and directed the tumultuous elements of German thought into healthier channels and towards higher ideals of life.

An enthusiast for the folk-songs and ancient sagas of Europe, and a lover of Shakespeare and all English poetry, an ardent student of the language and religion

of all lands, Herder inaugurated the evolutionary treatment of civilization, and was thus one of the most powerful agents in maturing the intellectual life of his country, and among the earliest promoters of the historical method which has revolutionised the entire scientific and theological conception of the present age. Though no mean poet himself, not the least of his merits is that without exaggeration he may be styled the discoverer of Goethe. Five years his senior, Herder met the youthful poet at a susceptible moment, and became in matters of literature and art his guide, philosopher and friend. Under the influence of the elder, a new world was revealed to the younger man. The poetry of the East, Ossian, Goldsmith, and, above all, Shakespeare, fired his soul. "The first page of Shakespeare," says Goethe, "made me his for life." The supreme service which Herder rendered to Goethe was to deliver him from subservience to external authority. From this time there appears upon the stage of modern history a figure of unique and almost unparalleled power, whose character and teaching have done more than almost any other modern to change the main current of European thought.

In the personality of Goethe experience and expression are closely blended. He himself records "my poems are my confessions." It is true in some degree of all poets. It is eminently true of Goethe. He lived what he wrote—the incidents of his history are universalized and idealized—transformed in the alembic of his creative imagination—*Wahrheit und Dichtung* are fused into a whole.

Two periods of his life, roughly separated by his visit to Italy, may be distinguished. In the first he lived the world. In the second he lived himself.[1]

[1] See Kuno Fischer, *Göthe's Faust.*

At first his natural impulses burst forth and his manhood swerved from its rightful course. But as youth with its wild passion gave way to a maturer view of life, it became his purpose to be master of himself. The 'Sturm und Drang' period was succeeded by the classic period, and the poet resolved, as he himself says, "to deal with life no longer by halves, but to work it out in its totality."

If Rousseau, to whose writings Goethe was early attracted, was the symbol of the first period, Spinoza was the inspiration of the second. The Philosophy of the Dutch thinker coloured from this time his entire mental vision. It gave to his religious views that specially pantheistic cast which we detect in so many of his later works. Official Christianity did not appeal to the poet. Neither the lifeless orthodoxy of his paternal home, nor the mechanical theory as presented by Deism satisfied the intellectual cravings of his nature. The idea of an external designer or world-governor who "lets the world swing round his finger" gave place to the thought of an immanent all-pervasive deity. This conception of unity, rooted in a universal life, which is the central idea of Goethe's philosophy, does not swallow up or extinguish the differences of the world: it only brings them to full development, giving to the individual a feeling of confidence, and at the same time creating in the many a reciprocal sense of interdependence as parts of a larger whole.

While all the greater poems are reflections of personal experience, none so completely mirrors the poet's life as *Faust*. The Faust legend was his earliest fancy. The Drama was his latest completed achievement. It accompanied him through his long pilgrimage and imaged the successive phases of his spiritual evolution. It is particularly to be noted that the two epochs of

the poet's life are reproduced in Faust, and afford the clue to its meaning. Just as he passed from Romanticism to Classicism, so the hero of the drama, after he has emerged from the fiery furnace of earthly trial, is exalted to a higher sphere where amid more spiritual surroundings his purification is completed. The ground-thought of Faust, as in the Book of Job, is that "a man may err; but if he press bravely on and refuse to find satisfaction in the passing moment,[1] he may suffer, but cannot be finally lost." Not like the ascetic to renounce the world; not with the Epicurean to drink the world's cup of pleasure to the dregs: nor after the manner of the Stoic to defy the world's pain; but to go through the world using it and yet rising above it—that is man's ideal relation to life as depicted in Faust. But granting that this is the highest end of life it is more than doubtful if Goethe has succeeded in representing the hero as consistently true to his aim. Faust repeatedly succumbs to the satisfaction of the moment, and appears to attain final calm in the end by satiety rather than self-conquest. The moral earnestness which Goethe sought to portray is lacking in Faust, simply because it is lacking in himself. There are really two Fausts. The second and nobler is artificially super-imposed. It is an after-thought. The defect in Faust was indeed the root-defect in Goethe's own character. In later years he did attain to a calmer and more reasonable life. He passed, indeed, like his own creation, from the lawlessness of youth to a more stable and rounded manhood. But he simply outlived his passions; he did not master them. There is no evidence that he ever felt a single twinge of conscience, or pang of contrition. Written

[1] "Ein guter Mensch in seinem dunklen Drange ist sich des rechten Weges wohl bewusst."—*Faust.*

across the expansive brow was one word, which sums up his character and work—'Self-sufficiency.' He calls himself a heathen : and though, towards the end of his life his attitude to Christianity was more sympathetic, his general view of life remained pagan. Art was his religion, self-culture his motto.

All his life the problem of evil had a strong fascination for Goethe. It is this theme which invests the tragedy of Faust with its undying human interest, and constitutes Mephistopheles one of the most powerful creations in all literature. No one more than Goethe could so surely sound the deeps of human woe, or more correctly diagnose the sources of man's misery—saying, "Thou ailest here and here." But it was not given to him to point men to the all-sufficing remedy for the sufferings of the race. He preaches, indeed, the moral idea of renunciation. But what he inculcates amounts to nothing but a dignified attitude of detachment or independence in regard to the goods that fortune has refused. He himself had a strong repugnance to all forms of suffering. One can hardly extract from his teaching the sublime Christian doctrine that a man must die to self that he may live. If he does speak of the 'Sanctuary of Sorrow' as the innermost shrine of religion, he himself does not personally enter that holy of holies. In *Iphigenia* he paints his idea of a Christian saint, but the principle of self-realization through self-sacrifice lies beyond his purview. The fact is, which cannot be missed, that great as this man is, he fails to grasp the historical meaning of Christianity. What he cannot pardon is its severe morality, the ascetic element in it which involves, as he thinks, a complete severance of the natural and the spiritual.

If we seem to have dwelt more on the shortcomings

of Goethe than his excellences, we must not forget his largeness of mind and heart, the many-sidedness of his sympathies, the optimism of his faith and high idealism of his outlook upon life, and the impulse his spirit has given in almost every realm of thought to the great conceptions and ideals which have shaped the modern age. His supreme service to our era is his plea for an all-embracing conception of life—a religion which will include many realities and interests which the mediæval interpretation of Christianity had excluded. He would have us recover the ideals of the Classical Age.

Goethe is the first of the Moderns in the sense that he was among the earliest to preach the gospel of 'culture' which, in the second half of the nineteenth century, seized the higher intellects of Europe, and especially gave a new watchword to our own land. The School of which Goethe and Schiller were the creators, and Carlyle and Matthew Arnold in different ways the representatives, may be traced to an impulse to revivify ideals which the Evangelical interpretation of Christianity had tended to taboo.

The fundamental conception to which they gave the name of culture is summed up by Goethe in the formula: "Life in the whole, in the Good, in the Beautiful." There is no desire to disparage goodness. The apostles of 'Light and Leading' are opposed only to the Puritanism which sets "Goodness upon an unapproachable height above her sisters."[1] Morality, the quest of the good; Art, the quest of the Beautiful; Science, the quest of the True—these constitute the 'Wholeness' of life, and the religion which does not embrace all three must be pronounced partial and insufficient to meet the needs of man.

[1] Seely, *Natural Religion*, p. 147.

It will not be necessary for our purpose to dwell at length upon the later literature of Germany. Schiller, the contemporary and friend of Goethe, embodied in the main the same message as the seer of Weimar. He is before all else the man of deeds, the poet of freedom. It is this character which stamps all his works and constitutes him the first of Germany's dramatists. No writer more characteristically embodies the genius of the German people or more powerfully expresses the best aspirations and struggles of his countrymen. What the philosophy of Spinoza did for Goethe, the philosophy of Kant achieved for Schiller: It gave to his life that deep note of earnestness and moral conviction which pervades all his writings and made him the exponent of the dignity and sanctity of manhood which he never ceased to set forth as the ideal of life.

IV

The renascence of the poetic spirit which began in Germany with Lessing and culminated in Goethe and Schiller, was part of a larger revival to which the name of 'Romanticism' has been assigned. The movement has been defined as the awakening of the spirit of wonder in poetry and art, and the yearning for greater freedom of life and thought. Though for a time it found more passionate expression in Germany than in either France or England, it was there short-lived, and speedily degenerated into grotesque and even repulsive forms of licence. Its most notable representatives were the brothers Schlegel and Tieck. On the philosophical side, Schelling and Schleiermacher were tinged with the Romantic spirit: while Novalis, one of the most original and devout personalities which

Germany has produced was its apostle and high priest. Jean Paul Richter, satirist and humorist, a romancer of quaint fancies and homely utterance, cannot be assigned to any School. In Heine, the greatest poet of the period, a writer of strange contrasts, whose life was a long-drawn-out tragedy, yet whose bright and tender lyrics will live as long as there are lovers of song, poetry "cast off the swaddling clothes of Romanticism." Partaking more of the French delicacy and lightness of touch than of the cumbrousness of the German, he was the last of the Teutonic poets, and from the detachment of his martyr-bed in Paris, was able to discern the coming decadence of his own Fatherland.

The Revolution in France of July 1830, acted like an electric shock upon the student communities of Germany. Up to this time the strongest forces in their intellectual life were the Poetry of Goethe and the Philosophy of Hegel—linked together in common devotion. But now the revolutionary elements surging in the breast of the German youth burst forth. The tone of Philosophy and Literature changed. Goethe was acclaimed as the representative of anti-Christian ideas, while Hegel, the Conservative vindicator of the Prussian State, was hailed as the exponent of the most radical principles of socialism. This new literary group assumed the proud name of 'Young Germany' Its leaders, Gutzkow, Laube and Börne, advanced far beyond a mere war upon cant and bigotry, and inveighed against all religious and moral traditions. "Had the world never known a God," cries Gutzkow, "it would be a happier place to-day." [1]

[1] Cf. *Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature*, by Geo. Brandes, vol vi. for good account of "Young Germany"; also, Braasch, *Die religiösen Strömungen der Gegenwart*, 48-58.

Some of the better spirits of Germany, such as Menzel the historian, and Karl Hase the theologian, confronted this destructive creed with energy. But notwithstanding these and other protesting voices, from 1848 onwards German literature and culture began to develop in a naturalistic direction. The sublime ethical teaching of Kant and Fichte, and the wholesome idealism of Lessing and Goethe, fell into disfavour, and a philosophy of crass materialism, fomented by utterances of Feuerbach, and eventually of Nietzsche, usurped their place. Intoxicated by military conquest and material wealth from '70 onwards, the Prussian State made a fetish of militarism and aimed at world-supremacy. German Kultur, preached by its intellectuals, dominated the political life of the Fatherland and created at length that wild bid for power which plunged the whole civilized world into the tragedy of 1914.

CHAPTER XI

THE SPIRITUAL MESSAGE OF MODERN ENGLISH POETRY

The strands of religion and poetry have been more closely entwined in Britain than almost any other country save perhaps Italy of the Renaissance. Among the early bards of England—Langland, Spenser, Milton, and even Shakespeare—to name no others, the religious strain was strong. It is the rediscovery of the divine element after its eclipse during the age of Deism that gives to the nineteenth century its poetic splendour. In this time we have Coleridge and Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley and Keats, Browning, Tennyson and Matthew Arnold, as well as Scott and the greatest group of novelists in the world, and the spiritual note is distinctive of them all.

I

The Spirit of Romanticism which, as we have seen, affected every country towards the close of the eighteenth century, assumed in England a less negative character and found utterance in quieter and more simple forms. The movement began with a return to nature, but it gradually took a wider sweep and embraced the humaner aspects of experience. The poetry

beginning with Dryden and ending with Pope was artificial in form and conventional in tone and taste. Such poems as Thomson's *Seasons*, Gray's *Elegy* and Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, in their appeal to nature were the harbingers of a new spirit. It is, however, to two poets, differing alike in nationality and temperament, that we must ascribe the honour of being the actual heralds of the wonderful outburst of song which irradiates the beginning of the new period —Cowper and Burns. Cowper is the first of English poets who loved nature for its own sake. The *Task* differs from the *Seasons* in that, while the poem of Thomson is largely descriptive and external, Cowper's is more reflective, bringing nature into closer touch with life. Moreover, we are indebted to the poet of Olney, not only for the pathos of which he is a master, but also for a delightful vein of humour which relieves the gloom of temperament not wholly excluded from his verse. The great evangelical revival of the eighteenth century, reflected in many of Cowper's poems, cast the shadow of uncertainty upon his personal relation to the Redeemer, but his gentleness of nature and steadfast faith in divine love lifted him above the limitations of his creed and enabled him to sound the note of 'the larger hope,' in regard to the destiny of mankind. The friend of 'Cowper was Newton, and Newton was the child of Whitfield.'[1]

Robert Burns shares with Cowper the distinction of creating a new interest in man as man. He could not surpass the English poet in his sense of brotherhood, but he added passion and intensity to Cowper's calmer temper. The influences affecting the English writers of his time touched but little the spirit of the Scottish poet. He was essentially the creation of his own land.

[1] *Theology of the English Poets*, by Stopford Brooke, p. 14.

His genius, spontaneous like some impetuous torrent of his native soil, owed nothing to education and little to political environment. It is true his ode, *A Man's a Man for a' that,* was composed two years after the outbreak of the French Revolution, and it is more than likely that an event which shook the very foundations of society deeply stirred his nature and caused him to give utterance to those thoughts of brotherhood and liberty which are so distinctive of many of his finest verses. Other poets of his time sang of the woes of the poor, but there was an element of detachment in their pity. It was given to this son of toil, who "followed the plough along the mountain-side," identified with the class to whom his heart went out, to proclaim the inherent dignity of man, independent of rank or wealth. His passionate human emotions, his deep love of country, his reverence for truth and honesty and scorn of all pretence and self-righteous bigotry, make him what he claimed to be, "the singer of the loves, the joys, the rural scenes and rural pleasures of my native tongue."

He thus became not only Scotland's national bard, but the exponent and painter of those primary heart-truths and home virtues which give virility and freedom to a people who base their lives upon them. Burns has no special philosophy of life to expound. His is the simple creed, shed of intolerance, inherited from an austere but pious ancestry, that God is the sustainer of every one of His creatures. His belief in the Divine Fatherhood did much to break down the rigid narrowness of Scottish theology and prepare his countrymen for a larger interpretation of the Gospel of Redemption. It was impossible for him to hold the strong Calvinistic tenet of the reprobation of the larger portion of mankind: and to him, more than

to Shelley and Byron, because of his more positive sympathy with religious traditions, the present generation owes much of its emancipation from the harsher thoughts of Divine Sovereignty, and its now prevalent belief in the universality of God's love.

II

The return to nature, sometimes, though inaccurately called 'Naturalism,' manifested in the poets just named, became reinforced by a new factor—the Revolutionary Spirit—in the group of poets who succeeded. Nowhere did the hopes and aspirations for the world's regeneration, awakened by the French Revolution, find more sympathetic expression than in the English poetry of this period. When the outbreak took place, Southey, Coleridge, Wordsworth and Shelley were in the ardour of their youth, and each, according to his own temperament, participated in the sanguine expectation and the not less depressive disillusionments which the event created. The first three were almost of the same age. Wordsworth, the oldest, was born in 1770, Coleridge in 1772, Southey in 1774. Shelley was some twenty years younger, but he died in 1822, and was survived by Coleridge and Wordsworth by more than thirty years.

Southey's relation to the Revolution was slight. His first works, *Joan of Arc*, and *Wat Tyler*, show the early trend of his thoughts ; but his subsequent literary efforts were devoted to subjects remote from the burning interests of the age.

The early life and work of Coleridge bear the impress of the age's ferment. He was one of the first to see in the spread of Revolutionary ideas the Revelation

of God ; and upon the Universal Fatherhood he bases the complementary truth of man's universal brotherhood, or as he put it, "the right of the meanest to equal liberty with the greatest."

In the passion of his communistic zeal, Coleridge surpassed the others, with the exception, perhaps, of Shelley ; and his subsequent recoil was proportionately strong. But it is not as the poet of social propagandism we delight to remember him. The author of the *Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel* stands apart from political agitations. It is as the creator of ideals and the awakener of thoughts which have enriched man's spiritual outlook that he is esteemed as one of the inspiring energies of the new age.

The weird supernaturalism of *Christabel* and *The Ancient Mariner*, while expressive of an original mystic strain in the poet, had, like the transcendentalism of his philosophy, its immediate impulse in the study of German literature. The intense and vivid realism, the quaint yet simple style, the minute observation of the wilder aspects of nature, together with the profound religious symbolism, constitute *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* one of the greatest poems in our language. "This wild thing of wonder," "the captured star," abides fresh and vital to-day after a hundred years. For this, if for nothing else, Coleridge is among the immortals, second to none, as a spiritual seer. "Not in the whole range of English poetry," says the present professor of Poetry in Oxford, whose judgment in these matters is unerring, "not in Shakespeare himself, has the lyrical genius of our language spoken with such a note."[1] The burden of the tale is the poet's own personal knowledge of the reality of God. Coleridge himself is the Ancient Mariner.

[1] Arthur Quiller Couch, *Studies in Literature*, p. 220.

He would impart to others what he himself has learned through suffering. He has tasted the horrors of loneliness. He has been where men are bereft of the pity and presence of God. "Alone on the wide, wide sea, And Christ would not take pity on my soul in agony."

This is the root of all sorrow: the soul wrapped in self creates its own torment. Our sins make a waste about us where God seems not to be. But it is the story of deliverance—of the soul brought back and the old familiar joys restored.

> O dream of joy! Is this indeed
> The lighthouse top I see?
> Is this the hill? Is this the kirk?
> Is this mine own countrie?

Everything is God's. And in Him man finds all else, and a love for all that God has made:

> He prayeth best who loveth best
> All things both great and small.

It is the return of the soul to its true home—It is man come to himself in the love of God—It is the secret of all life and religion.

Great as Coleridge was as a poet, it is as a philosopher and teacher that he has left his mark upon the thought of our country. Men as various as Wordsworth and Hare, Maurice and Newman, pay tribute to the suggestiveness of his philosophy. He was the first to deliver his countrymen from the shackles of the eighteenth century empiricism. As the exponent of the higher Idealism he exploded the Lockean view that the Soul is the passive recipient of external impressions, showing as Kant had taught, that the mind itself is a constituting factor in knowledge, and that in virtue of the inherent power of the soul, man is in touch with

the great moral and spiritual realities which constitute his essential life.

But most of all as the interpreter of Christianity, Coleridge ranks as the pioneer of liberal theology. He saw in the Christian Faith "the true explanation of the facts of our spiritual experience and the true remedy for their disorder." [1] He thus vindicates the rationality of faith as against the negations of materialism on the one side, and on the other, against the crudities of ultra-evangelicalism. But Coleridge produced no great philosophical work. His great book is among the world's unwritten volumes. Pouring forth his mental treasures in *Essays, Table Talk* and *Biographia Literaria,* his philosophy remains fragmentary and elusive; and while it has been profoundly influential in the early part of the century, it may now be regarded, not indeed as superseded, but as incorporated in the widening stream of British Thought.

The poetry of nature and of man reaches its culmination in Wordsworth, the greatest of the English poets of last century. The boundless enthusiasm for the liberation of man expressed in different ways by Rousseau and Goethe, and stimulated by the Revolutionary events on the Continent, laid strong hold of Wordsworth. But when France became the willing instrument of the ambitions of Napoleon, his republican faith suffered a shock: and in place of his former admiration of France there arose within him a repugnance to her not less vehement, as the cruel oppressor of the world. Though his disappointment abated his enthusiasm it did not really crush his hope for man, and to the end, in spite of a more conservative attitude

[1] Tulloch, *Movements of Religious Thought in Nineteenth Century,* p. 12.

towards Church and State, he remained a devout believer in the primitive doctrines of 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.' [1]

Every great experience is a test of life, and the way a man uses it is the measure of his strength. Among the poetic spirits of France the reaction begotten of the Revolution turned to despair and unbelief. "Life," remarks Walpole, "is a comedy to those who think, a tragedy to those who feel." If Balzac, whose *Comedie Humaine* reduces life to a jest, belongs to the first, Alfred de Musset and Felix de Lammenais may be classed with the second. These writers responded in different ways to the catastrophe of their country. There are few sadder stories than De Musset's *La Confession d'un Enfant du Siècle*—a tale of youth, passed among the fragments of a broken world, with his human illusions lying around him like fallen leaves —"bare, ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang." It is something more than disenchantment, it is, as the French poet himself calls it, "the annihilation of hope." That was the effect which "the blood which was shed in 'ninety-three" had on those who stood nearest to the scenes of horror; it reduced their faith to blasphemy and negation. Even in England, removed from the actual pressure of the tragedy, there were those like Shelley and Byron who voiced the negative side, the sense of failure and blank despair.

In contrast to these prophets of revolt and negation, it is exhilarating to turn to the positiveness and wholesome vitality of Wordsworth. His poetry is essentially recreative and constructive. Like Goethe, he gathers up the broken fragments and 'sees life whole.' He is the representative in the realm of poetry, as Kant

[1] Cf. *Sonnets on Ecclesiastical History.*

is in the realm of philosophy, of the great constructive ideas which have reshaped our age.

It is indeed true that the higher idealism, so happily described as the 'Renascence of Wonder,' had, before Wordsworth's time, begun to affect the spirit of the age and shadow forth the unity of nature and man, and the community of both in God. But those who at an earlier period caught a vision of this truth, were the heralds rather than the revealers of the reality. No one has given to the thought such illuminating utterance as Wordsworth. With him it was a new creation. He is not the echo of other voices. He had few teachers beyond the rocks and cataracts of Cumberland, and the simple dalesmen with whom he communed around his home. He was not a reader of many books, and it is doubtful if the teaching of either Goethe or Rousseau contributed much to the moulding of his mind. He drank from holier springs of inspiration than either had opened. In *Tintern Abbey* he strikes a note that had not been heard before—"a sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused, whose dwelling is the light of setting suns. . . . and in the mind of man.'

"We go to Wordsworth, accordingly, as a Seer of the Age, and as its voice; the one who, more than all, translated into rhythmic phrase its vision of the unity of Nature, Man and God."[1]

Matthew Arnold complains that Wordswortheans are apt to praise their hero for the wrong things, and to lay too much stress upon what they call his philosophy.[2] We must beware of seeking in Wordsworth or any poet, "a scientific system of thought." And

[1] Cf. A fine appreciation of Wordsworth by James Robertson Cameron, *The Renascence of Jesus*, p. 62 ff.

[2] See essay introductory to *Selections of Wordsworth's Poems*.

though he was a devout believer in the dogmas of the Christian creed and a loyal adherent of the Church of England, we look in vain for any direct exposition or explicit pronouncement of religious doctrine. It is not as to a theologian we would go to the "solitary among the mountains." In his religious opinions he is content to follow the old tracks of Anglican tradition. But in contact with him we are conscious of a fresh uplift of soul and inspiration. The old mechanical notion of God's relation to the world is not so much controverted as quietly displaced, by the deeper view of His all-pervasive presence. He goes to the core of religion, showing that it is of the very nature of man, and has its springs in the instincts of the heart and our common life. He has revealed the universality and breadth of religion, giving to it a richer meaning and fuller content. Like Dante, he broke down the old duality between God and the World, the Sacred and Secular.

Of three great themes, old yet ever new, primal yet perennial, he never tired; around which he cast incessantly the glow and glamour of his imagination. These were Nature, Man and God, in their distinction, yet in their unity. He invested Nature and Man with a new mystic meaning, seeing in each the utterance of one Spirit of life, and in both "the light that never was on sea or land." It is a platitude to say that Wordsworth is the poet of the power of nature unless we add that he was still more the poet of the power of the human mind. For it is in the mind that the elements of truth and beauty, concealed and widely dispersed in the world, are brought together and blended into harmony.

Nature and humanity are alike sacred, because they have a common source in God. For Wordsworth,

amid all its variety, there is but one principle in the Universe,—vital and all diffusive,

> " From link to link
> It circulates, the Soul of all the world."

He finds God everywhere. In Him do all things have their meaning and music,

> " Characters of the great Apocalypse,
> The types and symbols of Eternity."

In this profound discernment of the divine omnipresence and immanence we reach the key and climax of Wordsworth's message. It is the commonplace of modern theology. If it may not be called the discovery of Wordsworth, it is the distinctive note of his teaching, and no one before or since has given to the thought such impressive accent. It is the mystery, the wonder, the radiance of the indwelling deathless spirit that like an atmosphere invades and impregnates all he writes. Wordsworth has been charged with preaching Pantheism. There is, indeed, an element of Pantheism in all deeper religious feeling. Nowhere does it receive fuller manifestation than in Pauline and Johannine Christianity. But if Pantheism means the absorption of the Deity in nature, and the indiscriminate identification of God and the universe, then Wordsworth was as little a Pantheist as St. Paul Himself.

Some writers have expressed disappointment that a poet so devout of life, so convinced of God and immortality, has given almost no hint of the great central truth of religion—the Incarnation of God in Christ ; and, unlike Tennyson and Browning, left untouched the mystery and meaning of the " strong Son of God, immortal love." But it would be ungrateful to cavil

at what has been omitted. Let us be thankful, rather, for the splendid witness to the reality and power of the Divine Spirit in life the poet has borne. He has revealed to us the joy every one may discern in nature, and in the simple affections and duties of life. He tells us with a rhythm and beauty of language that will never lose its charm, and with a serenity and seriousness of faith which goes to the heart, that this is a joy, the deepest and most unfailing, accessible to man. He sings of what all men seek, and unseals the spring from which all may draw, "of joy in widest commonalty spread."

III

In the imaginative world—the world of dreams and visions—to which men turn in their moods of unrest and discontent, no one takes a higher place than Shelley. Born twenty years later than Wordsworth, the first enthusiasm created by the French Revolution had passed before he began to write. In his envisionment of the future of man he carries us further than Wordsworth. The social question, as we now understand it, had hardly taken shape in the youth of Coleridge and Wordsworth. And Shelley may be regarded as among the first to voice the discontent and sense of wrong which was afterwards to find utterance in the political writers of the nineteenth century. "Shelley expresses the future ideal of knowledge transfused by love and power, more perfectly than any other poet of the age." He sings triumphantly of the regeneration of man. In *Prometheus Unbound* he attains to a fuller vision of the future of Science than even Victor Hugo.[1]

[1] See Marvin, *Century of Hope*, pp. 22 and 56.

But Shelley, as has been acutely remarked,[1] "lived in two worlds. The one was the world of Mankind and its hopes, the other, the world of his own heart, with its disappointments and regrets. And his poetic life was an alternate changing from the one world to the other. He began as the prophet of the ideas of the French Revolution. *Queen Mab* was written with the enthusiasm of youth for the overthrow of the evils that oppressed mankind and in hope of its deliverance. But by the year 1815 this exuberance passes, the circumstances of his own history cause him to lose all interest in man, and *Alastor* is entirely occupied with his own solitary and wasted life. That note of personal regret and sadness is never long absent from his poems. Banished from his university and home, an exile from all the best institutions and traditions of his country, it is not wonderful that this sense of desolation and exile should affect his life and colour all his poetic work. A thread of pain and revolt runs through his later lyrics only relieved now and again, as in the *Adonais*, *Prometheus*, and the *Ode to Liberty*, by a gleam of triumphant hope. Notwithstanding the wail of sadness that sounds in many of his poems, the darkest moments of reaction did not wholly extinguish the flame of hope, and after the most passionate outburst of despair there comes a rebound of exultant joy, and he sings again of the restoration of mankind.

It may sound like a paradox to claim Shelley as a religious poet, yet as Leigh Hunt,[1] who knew him well, says, "with all his scepticism, Shelley's disposition may be truly said to have been anything but irreligious." It is not always the professed unbeliever, but

[1] Stopford Brooke, *Introduction to Poems of Shelley*.

[2] *Memoir of Shelley*, p. 16.

he who never thinks of religion at all, who most lacks religious feeling. The leading feature of Shelley's character may be said to have been a natural piety which is revealed again and again as an under-current in even his most negative writings. If he showed an impatience in contradicting the worldly and tyrannical notions of a supernatural power, prevalent in his day, he himself clung with all the more passion to the belief in an all-pervading 'Spirit of Intellectual Beauty.' He was not an atheist or materialist. If he had any positive theology he may be called an 'Ideal Pantheist.' He loved to conceive of the universe as not dead but alive. In his highest moments of inspiration this is the faith which breathes through his works. In one sense he is the most spiritual of all the poets. Whatever we may think of his belief or unbelief, he lifts us out of the material world into the Eternal, and disengages us from the realm of sense by the purity, detachment, and almost unearthly quality of his thought. No poet has more poignantly expressed the mystery of life, or given more plaintive voice to the speechless yearnings of the Soul.[1] Even by his negations he did a work for theology that needed to be done. He threw scorn upon the notion of God and man's relation to God, "partly Hebraic, and therefore sacerdotal and sacrificial, partly deeply dyed with asceticism derived from the oriental notion of evil in matter," which existed in Evangelical circles of his time. "The sovereign right of God, because He was omnipotent, to destroy the greater part of His subjects: the right of a caste of priests to impose their doctrines on all, and to exile from religion all who did not agree with them"—these views, now generally

[1] See ode, "To a Skylark," *Adonais*, and his last poem, "The Triumph of Life."

condemned by modern thought, Shelley was among the first to denounce.[1]

But not to those portions of his poetry which denounce what was false and evil in his own day, but to those, rather, which represent and reveal what is good and true, and set forth the higher hopes and ideals of man, do many in our own age owe their wider and nobler views of God. "Many men," says the writer just quoted, "who were quite careless of religion yet cared for poetry, were led and are still led, to think concerning the grounds of a true worship by the moral enthusiasm which Shelley applied to theology. He made emotion burn around it, and we owe to him a great deal of its nearer advance to the teaching of Christ." [2]

The late Mr. R. H. Hutton has drawn attention to the spirit of doubt which constantly recurs in some of the English poets from Shelley's day to the 'eighties—the always bitter and sometimes almost tragic cry of desolation with which one after the other, as they gaze eagerly into the spiritual world, they nerve themselves to confess, what they have not found and cannot find there.

The two poets who most nearly approach Shelley's spirit of doubt are Clough and Arnold. In both of these there is an element of desolation and sadness, a tone of regretful unbelief in their verses reminding us of Shelley. Yet through the doubt there runs also a thread of spiritual conviction, a determination to face the worst with the honesty of men, and reap what good they can from their sorrowful denials. The reader of their poetry is not unnerved by their boldest confessions as he is by Shelley's desolate cry.

[1] See Stopford Brooke, as above, p. 26.

[2] Stopford Brooke, *Introduction*, p. 28.

It is remarkable that they cannot renounce reflection upon positive truth, and it is the profoundest writers of the Christian religion to whom they always return with a kind of yearning hope that all is not lost. When Clough exclaims

> Christ is not risen. No,
> He lies and moulders low,

there is an undercurrent of faith in the power which enables him to doubt, and even a lingering remnant of belief in Christ, which he would fain keep—in spite of what he deems untrustworthy evidence.

> Though He be dead, He is not dead
> Nor gone, though fled :
> In the true Creed,
> He is yet risen indeed,
> Christ is yet risen.

In M. Arnold's poetry we find the same interweaving of faith and unbelief, of despair and hope. There is, indeed, nothing in modern poetry more touching than this confession, almost similar to Clough's :

> Now He is dead. Far hence He lies
> In the lone Syrian town,
> And on His grave with shining eyes
> The Syrian stars look down.
>
> In vain men still with hoping new,
> Regard His death-place dumb,
> And say the stone is not yet to,
> And wait for words to come.
>
> Alone, self-poised, henceforward man
> Must labour : must resign
> His all too human creeds, and scan
> Simply the way divine.

Nor is this a solitary instance. It may be said to be the note of Arnold's poems everywhere—this confession

of a pensive doubt, yet with an undertone of deeper trust—Unbelief, or suspense of faith, qualified by a yearning hope. . . . It is a denial of the supernatural in life, yet allied with a firm belief in the spiritual in heart, and in a " power making for righteousness." It was begotten partly by the influence of the teaching of Goethe and the music of Shelley, and partly of the intellectual misgivings which the progress of modern science had created in the minds of the thoughtful. Arnold grew up under the shadow of Wordsworth, whose brilliant interpreter he became. If he had not the serenity of faith nor the intensity of poetic feeling of the master, he continued the nobler Wordsworthian traditions which were in danger of perishing. If his philosophy of life seems none too hopeful, he calls us back to great basal truths of duty and right, which man cannot, except to his loss, resign. If he represses where Browning encourages, the reader must not mistake his restrained and measured utterances for the last word on life.

IV

The feature to which we have just referred does not belong to the two greatest poets of the later part of the century, Tennyson and Browning. There is no writer so steadfastly optimistic as Robert Browning, and none who gives a more splendid vindication of the Christian Faith. And while there are passages in the poetry of Tennyson in which we catch an echo of the dreariness and dismay which would befall man if he were left alone with nature, and if the prognostications of evolutionary science were to be realized, he clings persistently to the larger hope and does not hesi-

tate to affirm that in the "strong Son of God, immortal Love," we have the highest manifestation of God. And even in those verses in which he dwells on the mystery of life—the unknowableness of things behind the veil—he does not leave us without a ray of light or ground of faith.

Tennyson died in 1892. The fame of the poet had slightly begun to wane before his death, and his place of pre-eminence has since been hotly disputed. But there are signs to-day of a partial return of the ebbing tide.

The philosophical difficulties with which his own mind wrestled, and which seemed very real in his earlier life, have long since yielded to others more vital: and even the *Idylls*, once so popular, as well as his dramatic works, no longer answer to the needs of the new age. "The literary world fed on Meredith and Yeats, and Anatole France," says Mrs. Humphry Ward, "rebels against the versified argument, however gracefully built up, in *In Memoriam*, and makes mockery of the false history and weak sentiment of the *Idylls*."[1]

There will be few, we should think, among the lovers of reflective poetry, who will endorse this somewhat disparaging reference to *In Memoriam*. To us it seems one of the greatest poems of the century, embodying in splendid language the mystery of death and reflecting the ineffaceable yearnings of the human heart. Tennyson himself, speaking of the general drift of the poem, called it "a kind of small *Divina Commedia* ending in a marriage." It resembles Dante's poem, in that it takes us into the darkest regions, carries us onwards through self-conquest, out again into a realm of triumphant joy. A personal sorrow lies at the root of the poem. Death has quenched the light of love.

[1] A Writer's Recollections.

We hear at first the sad dirge of all-engrossing selfish anguish. But after stormy grief comes a calmer mood. The mourner acknowledges the rule of law: and finally the acquiescence in God's appointment gives place to the influence of hope. The note of joy is heard at the close:

> Once more we sang: they do not die
> Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
> Nor change to us, although they change.

He can think of the departed as occupying a larger and nobler place, and

> Trust that those we call the dead
> Are breathers of an ampler day
> For even nobler needs.

Nor is Tennyson the poet of individual hope alone. Ere the poem closes he voices a larger vision. He sees all the subtle threads of life woven into one vast and harmonious pattern: and all the vicissitudes of existence contributing to one great and noble end under the watchful care of God:

> That God which ever lives and loves,
> One God, one law, one element,
> And one far-off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves.

There is an agnostic element in Tennyson, as there is also in Browning, and in perhaps all the greatest poets—an element of wistful faith rather than clear conviction, which profoundly touched the heart of his own age. "We have but faith, we cannot know."

But no poet gives a more triumphant vindication of the working of Divine Love as the ground of 'the larger hope.' He has been called an exponent of the 'higher Pantheism.' But he does not despise these

forms of anthropomorphism which declare that the highest revelation of God must come through the incarnation of the Divine Spirit in a human life, and under the conditions of our common earthly existence.

Of Browning not less than Tennyson it must be firmly asserted that he was truly a Christian poet, who has portrayed for the more intellectual spirits of his own and the succeeding generation the higher aspects of religious thought. It would be an impossible task in a few sentences to give an account of Browning's theology. It is indeed questionable if his faith could be adequately represented by a series of cut and dried formulas. Great poets, Browning more than most, shrink from binding themselves by dogmatic phrases which but imperfectly express the many-sidedness of reality as they see it.

Browning does not hesitate to bring together seemingly opposing truths; and no great teacher is less obsessed by the fear of contradictions. He does not shirk the deeper problems of Christianity, nor conceal his own personal beliefs. In *Saul*, *Christmas Eve*, *Easter Day*, *The Ring and the Book*, the story of the Arabian physician concerning the resurrection of Lazarus, and innumerable other poems, he lays bare the very heart of his own faith; and, though he cannot be described as an orthodox disciple of the Christian Church, one cannot study his works without being convinced, as has been said, that "the one deepest belief of his life was that Christ revealed the divine mind in a sense so profound that the doctrine of the Incarnation was to him a real Word of God." [1]

Browning, before all else, is the poet of life; of its anguish, and quest, its travail and triumph. "My stress," he says in the Dedication to *Sordello*, "lay

[1] R. H. Hutton, *Aspects of Religious and Scientific Thought*, p. 392.

in the incidents of the development of a soul ; little else is worth study." He listens to the various voices of men who, in the midst of environing circumstances, have sought to work out their 'struggling aims.' But above the tumult and passion of the world one clear voice he hears which never ceases to call men to courage, manhood and duty. He early reached the conclusion from which he never swerved, that God is the thing the soul is ever, even in its unconscious strivings, longing for.

> What is that I hunger for but God,
> . . . . . .
> I do not plead my rapture in Thy works
> For love of Thee, nor that I feel one
> Who cannot die : but there is that in me
> Which turns to Thee, which loves, or which should love.[1]

There is a striking modernity in Browning's mode of stating religious truth. He reaches God through man. His love of God is not built up on arguments of design nor upon any evidences based on the conviction of the future life. In the depth of his own soul he finds God ; and in knowing what man is he comes to know what God is.

It is a commonplace to say that Browning is the poet of optimism. But it is no light-hearted, shallow "all's well with the world" he preaches. Spiritual lassitude and indifference is for him the worst of sins, "life's business being just the terrible choice." [2] Man is no idle spectator of the conflict between right and wrong. He is compelled, like God Himself, "to take sides." "He is emphatically the poet militant, the prophet of struggling manhood." [3] Everywhere his

[1] *Saul.*

[2] *The Statue and the Bust.*

[3] H. Jones, *Browning as a Philosophic and Religious Teacher*, p. 125.

teaching strikes the note of "vigorous decisiveness." We catch its tone in his earliest poems; nor does his courage fail as the battle gathers round him. In the latest of all his productions he still speaks of

"One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break." [1]

It is an invigorating message which the poet delivers to his fellowmen, wholesome, sagacious, self-restrained, never ignoring the difficulties of life but always insisting upon manly courage and strenuous resolve, "holding we fall but to rise, are baffled to fight better"; ever proclaiming that the best revealer of life's mysteries is life heroically lived, always trusting that there is good here and now, and that "the best is yet to be;" striving to turn life's opportunities to good, and believing through all, to the end, in right, in love, in God.

But powerful as Browning is as an ethical teacher, it cannot be forgotten that the strength of his stimulus and the secret of his passion lie in the rich positive faith he holds in the greatness of God's love as manifested in Christ, which pervades all his teaching. No modern poet has more clearly depicted what Christ, manifested in time, yet eternal and raised above all time, means for humanity.

The interest for present-day thought is that Browning emphasizes the living eternal Christ, not merely the historical Jesus of nineteen hundred years ago. It is no God 'beyond the stars' he bids us seek. It is "the God within the soul" as revealed in the ever-present living Christ, with whom, by reason of our affinity, we can find communion. Love is the keynote of his teaching—love which is the meeting-point of God and man, and man with man.

[1] *Asolando.*

Ritschl and his School would take us back in time to the historical Jesus, and discover in "the Christ after the flesh" alone the only possible form of intercourse with God.[1] To such teaching the finer mysticism of Browning is a wholesome counteractive. It is this aspect of Christian truth which the present generation needs to recover. If Browning, who more than all others is the preacher's poet, has helped the Church to realise a Christ, not of the distant past, merely, but of the present as well, the spiritual Christ as well as the historical, who is greater than any inspired writer can image forth, may we not welcome him as one of the greatest Christian seers who has a special message for our day?

> That one face, far from vanish, rather grows
> Or decomposes but to recompose,
> Become my universe that feels and knows.

On one occasion the poet read this epilogue to a friend; and as he finished the line which declared the eternity of the Face which men bewailed as vanishing, he said, "That face is the Face of Christ: that is how I feel Him."[2]

[1] See Herrmann's *Verkerr mit Gott.*

[2] Mrs. Sutherland Orr, in her *Life of Browning.*

III

THEOLOGICAL TENDENCIES

CHAPTER XII

SCHLEIERMACHER AND THE REVIVAL OF THEOLOGY

A HISTORY of theology in the nineteenth century does not enter into our scheme. Many names, as not relevant to our plan, must be passed over. Our object has been to select only those personalities and movements in the centuries under review which have left upon their times a distinct impress and have proved to be most potent energies in shaping present-day thought. The great productive era of theological speculation came to a close about the middle of last century. The period which followed is marked by eclecticism, by gathering up results, appraising values and concentrating attention upon the tendencies implicated in earlier activity. Few names of striking originality emerge. The idea of development, as we have seen, formulated by science, has greatly changed the outlook of man, and the effort of modern religious thought has been directed to an attempt to come to terms with this new conception of the world and to estimate its bearings upon Christian faith.

I

At the beginning of the century one name of transcendent importance stands out—that of Friedrich

Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher. He has been justly called the father of modern theology. All Schools in all countries acknowledge the new impetus he has given to Dogmatic study. His great work, *Der Christliche Glaube*, has been acclaimed as the most influential treatise on Theology given to the world since the *Institutes* of Calvin.

Schleiermacher was a contemporary of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, and takes his place along with them as one of the most original thinkers of the century. His attainments in the realm of philosophy have been only less remarkable than his theological achievements. As the reformer of German Protestant theology his influence has been as creative as that of Kant in his own department. To him is due the entire transformation that has taken place in the Conception of God. He gave a prominence to the teleological idea or ethical purpose in the divine government of the world. Henceforth, theology has concentrated its effort with a new seriousness upon the historical revelation of the Deity. Christ has become the acknowledged centre of divine manifestation; and Christianity is regarded as the absolute religion in a more comprehensive and intelligible sense than was formerly conceived.

As a result of this new Conception of God which Scheiermacher did so much to stimulate, four ruling ideas became prominent at the beginning of the nineteenth century. (1) The idea of unity and purpose in the world and in life and history. (2) The idea that this purpose or plan was a direct revelation of God. (3) The idea of the subordination of the natural to the spiritual. The natural exists for, and is, the servant or instrument of the moral and spiritual. The world is everywhere to be interpreted in the light of a moral

end, and God is the supreme sovereign of the universe. (4) The idea of a reawakened faith in Christianity as the absolute Religion. Christianity is the pivot of all history and Christ is the Centre of the World. Comparing in a general way the relation of the nineteenth century to the eighteenth, it might be said that the eighteenth century was destructive, while the nineteenth century was constructive. The eighteenth century was negative, the nineteenth positive: and lastly, the eighteenth was rationalistic, while the nineteenth was transcendental. Many causes combined to produce this new *Welt-Anschauung*. The Philosophy of Kant and Hegel, the new sense and appreciation of historical development, the Rise of Biblical Criticism, the influence of scientific discovery, and the effects of the Romantic movement—all contributed to this larger and broader view of life. But no single factor was more productive in changing the whole attitude of thought and giving a more positive meaning to Revelation than the theology of Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher was born at Breslau in 1768. His father was a clergyman of the Reformed Church, who came under the influence of the Moravian Brethren, to whose instruction he committed his son. The early training the lad received in the Moravian Schools of Nosky and Barby deeply impressed his nature and left its mark upon his subsequent thought. As a student he was educated at the university of Halle, where he made a special study of philosophy, and laid the foundations of the wonderful erudition which characterised his later career. He occupied commanding positions as preacher and professor, dying at last in 1834 as Professor of Theology in Berlin. His life may be divided into three periods: his early Moravian training, which gave an individuality and devoutness to his whole life-work; his period of

Romanticism, when he came under the influence of Schlegel and other leaders of the movement (1796); and the period of his special theological efforts, dating from 1804, to which belong the years of his long activity in the ministry, in public life, and in ecclesiastical interests, as well as in general literary and intellectual work. In these several periods the influence of Spinoza, Kant and Fichte may be discerned. More especially the influence of the philosophy of Spinoza can be traced throughout, as shaping his ideas of God's relation to the world, and giving that element of Pantheism to his theology which characterises it. Though a colleague of Hegel, his relations with his contemporary do not appear to have been intimate. His attitude to the Hegelian philosophy seems to have been one of protest rather than sympathy. In regard to the speculative treatment of religion, Hegel and Schleiermacher may be styled as contrasted and antipathetic types. Both, indeed, represent a view of life and the world inherited from Goethe. But while Hegel construed religion from the purely objective intellectual standpoint, Schleiermacher chose rather the subjective forms of intuition or feeling as the mode of approach.[1] Schleiermacher's chief works are : *Discourses on Religion to its Cultured Despisers*, 1799; and *The Christian Faith*, first published in 1821. In the former he may be said to deal with the more general question : What is Religion ? In the latter, What is Christianity ?

II

The *Discourses* was written when the Romanticist movement was at its height, and the writing reflects

[1] Cf. R. H. Mackintosh, *The Person of Jesus Christ*, p. 256.

the features of the times. The author was living in close association with the leaders of the movement, who regarded religion as a superstition of the vulgar. Art, poetry, aesthetic culture were the only forms of devotion worthy of a man of thought and refinement. Schleiermacher sought to show his literary friends that in despising religion they eliminated from culture all that was deepest and most distinctive in man. Religion was not a mere compendium of dogmatic statements about God; it was of the very essence of life, an original and vital element in human nature and history. It is the very expression of a man's true life. It is the highest manifestation of human freedom. The moral duty to be oneself rests on the religious view that "every man is a distinct image of the Infinite, that in him a portion of the Infinite Consciousness divides itself off, and, as a finite being, links itself to one definite movement in the series of organic evolutions." [1] In other words the infinite is endlessly at work expressing itself in manifold forms, and each individual comes to himself when he feels that he is one such expression of the Infinite. The creative power in man, the distinguishing mark of his greatness, is not reason in its narrower sense, but intuition or feeling. It is in the consciousness of dependence, the sense of need of and reliance upon the Highest that the dignity and greatness of man resides. This truth, which Schleiermacher learned from Spinoza, is the keynote of the speeches. As expressed in the earliest forms it is a truth of great value and of immense influence. It has reappeared in the higher poetry of the age, in Wordsworth, not less than Goethe. It is a truth, essential for giving meaning to life and duty. "Thus," cried Schleiermacher, to the Rationalist and Orthodox alike, "what you have

[1] *Reden*, quoted by Oman, *Problem of Faith and Freedom*, p. 215.

imagined to be religion is not really such. The dogmas and rites with which you identify it are only the garments in which for a time it has chanced to clothe itself, but which may be flung aside without touching the inner soul of reality. Religion is neither doctrine nor ceremony. It is inward experience. It has its home in the inner consciousness, the emotional nature of man. It is the soul's sense of the infinite. It is the feeling of absolute dependence."

The *Discourses* is not a systematic treatise. As a description of religion, it is defective, vague, mystical. As an argument for Christianity, or for what we call supernatural religion, it is inadequate. But as an appeal glowing with enthusiasm and conviction it was admirably suited to the object it had in view—to show men who thought themselves superior to religion, that they were leaving out the very thing that gave to the soul its grandeur, and to man his worth and dignity. It has been contended, that the idea of religion thus formulated is vague, cosmical and pantheistic. God's personality is rendered doubtful, Christ's pre-eminence is slurred over, and the power of reason is disparaged. But the protest of the author was timely. It gave a new significance to religion, and vindicated its independence, as essentially an end in itself, and not merely a means, as it had come to be regarded. As against Rationalism generally, and more especially against the modern allies and substitutes of religion, against ceremonialism, against utilitarianism in all its forms, and against what has been popularly called "the police view" of religion, it is most effective and of permanent validity. "Man," says Schleiermacher, "is to do nothing from religion, but everything with religion."

In the second work, *Der Christliche Glaube*, written

more than twenty years after, we have a fuller and more natural treatment, not of religions merely, but of the Christian religion. According to Schleiermacher's famous definition, Christianity is at once set forth [1] "as a teleological monotheism, the unique character of which is that every being is directly related to the Redemption, which is accomplished by Christ." This definition errs both by excess and defect. The redemptive note which it claims for Christianity may be said to underlie all religions, being characteristic of the great religions of India as well as prominent in the Old Testament. Further, the universality of Christianity is a feature which is not sufficiently brought out.[2] But the merit of the definition lies in its positive nature. The blessings of Christianity are emphatically declared to be of the nature of a 'redemption,' mediated through the person and work of Christ, who thus occupies in the religion which He founded a central and enduring position without parallel in other prophetic religions that rest upon the work of an individual founder.[3] Christ is no longer regarded as *a* mediator, but as *the* mediator, unique, supreme and final. This central position thus accorded to Christ, as the deliverer of man out of the state of bondage, in which the religious consciousness is fettered and repressed by the lower sensuous nature, makes the name of Schleiermacher 'epochal,' and invests his great dogmatic work with a significance for the future of theology which no other modern treatise before his time can claim. In the very method of procedure, the author's originality and freshness are disclosed. He does not start as theologians from earliest days have been wont to do,

[1] See the definition, *Glaubenslehre*, vol. i. § 11. p. 67.

[2] See Paterson, *Rule of Faith*, p. 348.

[3] *Idem.*

with God's attributes, as the great first Cause and Creator of the world, but with the feeling within us of absolute dependence upon a power outside ourselves, which he had already made the starting-point of his earlier treatise. This feeling is a basal fact of our constitution, an ultimate inference of the soul. It may be called man's consciousness or awareness of God. God is thus present to every man, inasmuch as this experience is a universal factor in life. But as Christ is the revelation of God, in and through whom all our blessings are mediated, the principle may be described as a feeling of absolute dependence in relation to Christ.

The treatise consists of two parts. The first part (confined to the first volume) deals with the Contents of Christian Experience—(1) the description and features of the religious consciousness in itself (Gottes-Bewusstsein) ; (2) the nature and development of sin or the lower sensuous consciousness, which in its various forms suppresses and counteracts the loftier God consciousness.[1] The second part, which is coincident with the second volume, treats of what Schleiermacher calls, " The other side of the opposition " (Des Gegensatzes andere Seite)—the consciousness of Grace, or the inward experience of Redemption as related to and conditioned by Christ.[2]

Dogmatics is thus concerned with three great facts in experience. First, the pious experience in itself ; second, the sinful experience ; and third, the experience of grace. The essentially subjective nature of the work at once strikes the reader. It is a statement of individual experience—an analysis of the inner consciousness. According to Schleiermacher nothing else has a place in the science of Christian faith. All proofs for the existence of God, which bulk so largely in

[1] § 62, § 65-85, pp. 345-421. [2] See paragraphs 86-169.

earlier works, are irrelevant. The being of God is implied in our own being. The only attribute to be ascribed to God, on the basis of religious feeling, is the primal causal agency (Ursächlichkeit). But this is a question for natural science, not for theology.[1] As Christians we are not called upon to take a side in the controversies of Naturalism and Pantheism. Piety does not demand a belief in miraculous interference with the laws of nature. It refers the world as a whole to God, and acknowledges the divine as the immanent cause.[2]

III

Schleiermacher's treatment of the *Being of God* is not wholly satisfactory. He is but a 'power,' a 'cause,' 'a something not ourselves'; and yet in so far as *we* are a part of the world, in a sense, identified with ourselves. The God of Schleiermacher is hardly personal, and is scarcely distinguishable from Pantheism. Here, as in many parts of his theology, the influence of Spinoza is discernible. God is reduced to a figment; His reality and character being conditioned by our subjective feelings regarding Him. Nor can the *doctrine of Sin*, as presented by Schleiermacher, be pronounced wholly adequate. In its antithesis to grace, or salvation, it is the negative aspect that is dwelt upon. Sin is a defect, a depression of the Consciousness of God. It is described as the opposition of the flesh to the spirit, and the hindrance of the higher consciousness by the lower or sensuous consciousness. It has its natural rise in the priority of man's sensuous development to his spiritual development.

[1] § 40, p. 193 [2] § 41, p. 200.

It is therefore the inevitable outcome of human nature—a thing not so much dependent upon the will as an original property of man's nature as such. The traditional ecclesiastical doctrine of two successive states, a state of integrity and a state of corruption, is interpreted as two parallel or contemporaneous elements of man's original state—a twofold experience of sense-weakness and of God-consciousness. These two are at war, and it is the dominance of the higher over the lower, conditioned and reinforced by union with Christ, which constitutes man's deliverance and salvation. Here again, though there is much freshness and truth in Schleiermacher's view, there are signs of Spinozan influence. According to Spinoza, evil is only a defective power in the reason over sense-affections, and not a conflict of the selfish will with the moral law as a whole.[1] The consciousness of sin is produced when we feel that the religious consciousness is arrested in its free development. We cannot attribute the origin of sin to the fall of Adam. It is a natural condition of all men from the beginning. Adam was simply a sample of the experience of every man.

Two interesting questions arise out of Schleiermacher's treatment of Sin. The first question has reference to the *origin of Evil*. Whence comes it that man is opposed to God and has that in him which tends to weaken and subvert the higher consciousness of good? Philosophy insists upon God's exclusive causality. It follows then that God must be the author of evil as well as of good. "But in so far as sin and grace are opposed to each other in our consciousness, God cannot be the author of the one in the same sense as He is the author of the other. But as we are conscious of grace only in its relations with sin, sin must be said to

[1] See Pfleiderer, *Development of Theology*, p. 114.

exist also in the will of God, and be ordained by Him," [1] even if it be something that is to be overcome and to disappear. God has willed sin just as He has willed the finite world, and great as are the difficulties in connection with the presence of evil it is impossible not to carry it back to the divine causality. But whatever be the source of evil, its presence in the world is so related to us as members of the kingdom of grace that it cannot demand from us long-suffering patience; and, still less, contented acquiescence as if it were absolutely necessary and irremediable.[2]

The other question relates to the *doctrine of Election*. The distinction between the elect and non-elect is based upon divine predetermination, which, however, must not be understood as dependent on fore-knowledge, as thereby the divine causality would be made conditional. Nevertheless, Schleiermacher softens the harshness of the Calvinistic position by limiting the dualism of elect and non-elect to the historical form of the Kingdom of God, and denying its validity as the definite end of things. From the nature of grace and the historical development of the Kingdom of God it is obvious that all cannot be received into the Christian community of redemption at the same time. Some must be sooner; others later. But there is only one divine predestination, that of the redeemed. All are elected to service; and if some are called earlier, they are called for the sake of others, and become the agents by whom God carries out his purposes and realises the fullness of redemption. Schleiermacher thus inclines to the final restoration of all. In the light of so great a hope, which is treated under what the author calls "the prophetic Articles," the general character of God's relation to man must be viewed.

[1] § 80, p. 439. [2] § 78, p. 433.

Schleiermacher represents Christianity more as a gradual, yet final completion of human nature, than as an abrupt and supernatural redemptive energy.

The special *doctrine of Salvation,* or soteriology, starts from the consciousness of a current of new divine life, which acts counter to the current formed by the life of sin. This counter-movement cannot originate in the life of sin common to humanity. It must therefore have its origin in the spiritual community founded by Jesus and be traced back to His saving activity as its cause. If Schleiermacher lays stress on the individual nature of faith, he no less strongly emphasises its social character. It is through the Church or religious community that the individual comes to the consciousness of Christ as the Redeemer. Christ founded a society in which He lives and through which He works continually down the centuries. Christ is indeed the source of the new spiritual life of communion with God, a life first realized by the Saviour Himself and communicated to those who were drawn into fellowship with Him. But this effect is conditioned on the entering of the individual within the historically constituted sphere of the Saviour's influence—the community of believers. What then, it may be asked, must the person of Jesus have been to create such a distinctive consciousness of piety which can be traced in all generations of Christians from the time of Christ's earthly life to our own day? The faith of the disciples cannot explain the Person: it is the Person who must explain their faith. If then we go back and study the consciousness of Jesus we see that He lived in perfect union with God. The divine spirit was in Him in absolute measure. His continuous and perfect piety is to be accounted for only as the result of the complete indwelling in His personality of the Deity.

Now that same union with God which He realized, it is His purpose to achieve in man ; and as Christian experience shows this has been His work through the Christian age. Through the channels of the religious community He has been continually bringing men into fellowship with God. Christianity, in other words, works through the Church : and the Church rests on Christ. Thus, as it has been said, Schleiermacher "follows the river of Christian truth *up* the stream rather than down."[1] He does not begin with what Christ was, by examining the written record of His words and deeds, and thus arguing what His effect upon man ought to be : he begins with Christ's manifested effects upon man, and argues from them to what Christ must have been. The community of believers is the witness and measure of the gift of the consciousness of God originally communicated by Christ. This creative power of Christ in human history may be called the determinative principle of Schleiermacher's doctrine of Faith.

When in the light of our present consciousness we come to examine more closely the *nature of Christ*, we perceive that His Person is not explicable by circumstances, by his environment or antecedents. He is explainable only as a new beginning, as a new initiative on the part of God. He is unique in His consciousness of God, so that His advent in history must be called a miraculous manifestation. Yet, at the same time, His appearance belongs to history. He comes at a particular time, and links Himself in a natural way with the development of man, simply fulfilling and embodying what man, according to the divine idea, was intended to fulfil and embody. His sinless nature was only the working out of the

[1] *Liberal Orthodoxy*, by H. W. Clark, p. 105.

forces which had been set in operation by God's first creative act, and which had been arrested by man's failure. But the miraculous in Christ must not be conceived in such a way as to negative the sameness of his nature and ours. However we interpret His origin, the complete historical character of His life upon the earth must be held fast. He must develop and unfold His powers in a human way, and express Himself through national peculiarities and particular modes of thought and action. He is not so much the example (Vorbild) as the type of mankind. What exists in each man only as an idea, an unrealized possibility, was actually fulfilled by Him in person. He realizes in Himself the ideal of man.

The *work* or redemptive agency [1] of Christ consists in imparting to men, through the attractive power which He exerts upon them, His own consciousness of communion with God, and as a result of that fellowship, His own holiness and felicity.

The old traditional dogma of the atonement as a satisfaction for sin does not receive much support from Schleiermacher. Redemption, he holds, must not be limited to Christ's death upon the Cross, nor can His work as Saviour be confined to any particular act or experience. Christianity saves, not by His expiating sacrifice alone, but by His whole life and activity, by what He was, not less than by what He did and suffered. "The work of Christianity, in short, consists in this—that by Him are created the experience of peace with God, and deliverance from sin. Christianity refashions those who come into contact with Him with the receptivity of the believing heart, and communicates to them an inner experience and relation towards God which are akin to His own." [2] "The

[1] Vol. ii. § 100-105, pp. 93-161. [2] *Rule of Faith*, p. 355.

Redeemer," he says, "takes up believers into the powerful grasp of His own Consciousness of God, and this is His redeeming work."[1] "His pure will to fulfil the divine will is by means of the vital union between Himself and us, operative in us, and we thus have part in His perfection, if not in the actual realization, nevertheless in the stimulus and spur. Christ has actually fulfilled the will of God, therefore, not in our *stead*, but for our *benefit*."

The subjective character of Schleiermacher's theology is specially manifest in his treatment of the atoning work of Christ. Sin is not conceived as something immaterial and positive, but as a lower stage of consciousness. Hence the atonement of Christianity lacks objectivity. It is something done *in* us, rather than something done *for* us. Salvation is a raising and enriching of life rather than a deliverance from the guilt and power of sin. This subjective view of regeneration affects also Schleiermacher's conception of the person of Jesus. Central as Christ is to his whole scheme of thought, it is the idea rather than the historical reality which bulks chiefly in his pages. The actual figure of Jesus as thus depicted lacks flesh and blood.

Our faith in Christ, Schleiermacher holds, is independent of all historical reports of the miraculous elements in His life. It is not because of the Bible and its miracles that we believe in Christ. It is because of Christ, whose influence we experience in our consciousness of redemption that we believe in the Bible. We ascribe to Scripture a normative value as presenting a substantially true picture of Jesus. Schleiermacher did not expressly deny the miraculous. But he held that it is not to the advantage of piety to see in the

[1] Vol. ii. § 100, p. 94, also p. 102.

details of Jesus's earthly career an interruption of the order of nature. To invest one who came to be the ideal and type of humanity with an unique supernatural experience, tends to weaken His sympathy with those who seek to share His life. But if Schleiermacher did not succeed in presenting a wholly satisfactory conception of Christ, it may be confidently affirmed that in making the Redeemer central to the Christian faith, he has given a powerful stimulus to Christological study and has specially focused theology since his day upon the problem of the relation of the Christ of history and the Christ of experience.

IV

Before passing to the development of theology at the hands of his successors, it may be useful to indicate shortly some elements of permanent value which Schleiermacher has contributed to modern religious thought.[1]

1. Schleiermacher has transformed the whole *method and scope of dogmatics*: as the champion of experimental religion he broke down the artificial distinction between natural and revealed truth, contending that religion is not a matter of intellectual proof, that it does not consist in the formulation of dogmas or the celebration of ceremonies, but in experience, in the immediate contact of the Soul with God. However his conception of religion errs on the side of extreme subjectivity, his protest against the exaggerated intellectualism of his age, disclosed both in the ranks

[1] For some of the points mentioned, the writer is indebted to a suggestive estimate of Schleiermacher, by W. Adams Brown, *The Essence of Christianity*, pp. 154 ff.

of the rationalists and evangelicals, was timely. Moreover, he brought into view some neglected elements vital to Christian faith, and has helped to create the modern interest in religious psychology which promises important results for the interpretation of the Christian consciousness.

2. He has set religion free from the unhistorical individualism which had clung to it before his time, by widening the religious consciousness into *a social consciousness* of the community. To Kant and his contemporaries religion was almost wholly an individual affair. In his relation to God man stood alone. The Church was simply composed of a number of separate units. To Schleiermacher, on the other hand, religion is essentially social, and communion with God is mediated through the religious community. No man can stand alone or pursue his higher calling in isolation. He only fulfils himself in association with his brethren. Only in the mutual support and co-operation of the members of the Christian Church does each individual attain to his complete development in Christ. Thus the Pauline doctrine of the Church as a living organism receives, at the hands of Schleiermacher, a vigorous restatement.

3. Again, a chief merit of Schleiermacher's theology is that he makes *Redemption* the distinctive feature of Christianity. It has been said, indeed, that this is an element in all real religion. It is their *raison d'être.* But even if this be true, it is no small distinction that this writer has set in the forefront an idea that was being largely neglected by the rationalistic dogmatists of the previous age. Schleiermacher, with a new warmth of fervency, focuses attention upon the great apostolic idea of Salvation as the supreme purpose and meaning of the religion of Christ, showing that in

Jesus there entered the world a new dynamic force which was designed to lift men out of their bondage to sense and sin, and to create a new and higher life of spiritual freedom in union with God—" the power of God unto salvation."

4. Reference must also be made to the emphasis Schleiermacher laid upon the *historical nature* of Christianity, and to the intimate relation which he established between faith and its Founder. Christ and Christianity were for him inseparable. Whatever defects we may discover in his account of the Redeemer's person and activity, no student of his great work can ignore the fact of the central position Christ held in the whole scheme. It has been strikingly remarked by Henry R. Smith that " it was Schleiermacher who brought German theology back to our Lord." [1]

5. Finally, it may be said that, by insisting that the Christian consciousness must be referred to Christianity as its source, and showing that the study of religion must be approached through history, he brought to the front the problem of the *relation of Christianity to other types* of faith. He has thus promoted the modern science of comparative religion. The supreme excellence of Christianity lies not in its exclusive supremacy, but in its recognition of the elements of truth which exist in every religion. It is the peculiar glory of our faith that it is inclusive of whatever is true and vital in man's consciousness of God. Since Schleiermacher's day, Christian thought has been confronted by two great questions: Wherein consists the uniqueness and universality of Christianity? and how is the Christ of history related to the Christ of faith?

It is Schleiermacher's unforgettable service that

[1] Quoted by Adams Brown, in *op. cit.*

while asserting the validity of Christian experience and exalting the mediatorship of Christ, he has also imposed the task upon modern theology of determining more clearly the historical basis and reality upon which our experience is founded.

CHAPTER XIII

RITSCHL AND HIS SUCCESSORS

It will not be necessary to dwell upon the immediate disciples of Schleiermacher. Of these, first importance must be given to Neander, more especially distinguished as the historian of the Church, Nitzsch, Twesten, Julius Müller, the author of the famous treatise on the Doctrine of Sin, and Ullmann, whose work on the *Sinlessness of Jesus* is a classic in the theological world. Of these, Twesten touches only indirectly on the pre-eminence of Christianity, while Nitzsch follows Schleiermacher in the main, but is separated from him in affirming the distinctive feature of Christianity to be the possession of a special supernatural Revelation, and in indicating the intimate relation in which Judaism stands to Christianity, not merely as preparatory to, but actually as part of, one great progressive system of Redemption.[1] The only theologian among the immediate disciples of Schleiermacher "who has taken up his ideas in their purity and developed them with independence," is Alexander Schweizer, the Swiss theologian (1808-88) who, while defining Christianity with Schleiermacher, as pre-eminently the religion of Redemption, sees in it the supreme fulfilment of Christ's ideal, and looks forward to the time when it will unite all that is best in the religious life of mankind.

[1] *System der Christl. Lehre*, 1839.

I

Since Schleiermacher's time German theology has concentrated its attention upon the person and work of Christ. The task begun by the author of *The Christian Faith* was taken up fifty years later by Albrecht Ritschl, whose effort it was to make more secure than his predecessor had done, the central place of Christ in religious faith.

Next to Schleiermacher's, the name of Ritschl is the most notable in modern theology, and his famous treatise, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, is only less important than *Der Christliche Glaube* in its influence on religious thought. Ritschl was born in 1822 in Berlin, the son of a bishop of the Lutheran Church. He was educated at Bonn and Tübingen. After a brilliant career as a student he became professor in Bonn in 1860. In 1864 he was called to Göttingen, where his main work was done, and where he continued to teach with great *éclat* and success till his death in 1889. He began his career under the influence of Hegel. But breaking with Baur—with whose work for a time he sympathised—he came to the position in which he felt that the sole hope for theology was the elimination from it of all metaphysical elements. He found, however, that it was impossible to discuss theological questions without postulating some theory of knowledge. This he derived from Kant, whose aim was to restrict reason within its proper bounds by carefully marking off the limits of possible knowledge. In harmony with the Kantian theory of cognition, Ritschl held that our knowledge is only of phenomena, that God is theoretically unknowable, and that our conviction of His

Existence rests on practical, not on theoretic judgment. Within the religious sphere, Ritschl's indebtedness to Schleiermacher is so great that many critics describe his theology as simply a 'revision' or restatement of the doctrines of his predecessor. While in the main he homologates the work of the older theologian, he does not refrain from adverse criticism. What chiefly attracted him to Schleiermacher was his teleological view of Christianity and the place given to the idea of 'fellowship' or community in religion.[1] He held, however, that his predecessor had not consistently developed these cardinal thoughts; and his main criticism of Schleiermacher's definition is that "while perceiving that the central blessings of Christianity are redemption through Christ and the Kingdom of God, he lost sight in the course of his work of the importance of the latter conception, and in particular that he failed to set redemption in its due place as the means by which God realises His grand end of the Kingdom."[2]

While everyone must recognise the independence and suggestiveness of Ritschl's scheme of religion, it is difficult to account wholly for the strong attraction his teaching has had for the modern Christian mind. "Its peculiar attractiveness lies just in this," says a careful expositor of his system,[3] "that in its distinctive watchwords it strikes chords which were already vibrating in the intellectual and spiritual atmosphere" of the times. It addresses an age that had become distrustful of reason, both as an instrument of philosophy and as an organ of natural science. In Germany the great speculative movement of the

[1] *R. und V.*, Eng. trans., p. 443, iii. pp. 9-12.
[2] W. P. Paterson, *The Rule of Faith*, p. 367.
[3] James Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 6.

earlier part of the century had broken down: while the high pretensions of the experimental sciences had also failed. Instead of the lofty idealism which gave a certain impressiveness to the intellectualistic systems of Schelling and Hegel, a bold naturalism had arisen which was threatening the very foundations of the moral life.

Ritschl's scheme of thought appealed to those who felt disquieted by the negative trend of the age. It voiced the growing distaste for metaphysics by dissolving the connection between religion and philosophy. It counteracted the prevalent weariness of dogmatic theology by offering a new interpretation of Christianity, which emphasized its ethical side, and met the social tendencies of the time by laying stress upon the Kingdom of God as the central ideal and purpose of Christian teaching.[1] Ritschl's merit lies in investing theology with a human interest. His teaching overflows with ethical enthusiasm. He seeks to banish all metaphysical considerations and to focus enquiry upon the central truths of our faith. He asks not, what are the theoretic ideas behind the phenomena and facts of life: not what is God in His celestial being: but what does God mean for us? Not what is Christ, in His source and nature; but what difference for our life do His person and teaching make? He has no patience with mere academic abstractions. The thing we call religion is a personal and practical matter. What is the worth and significance of faith *for us*? He has no interest in what God is, in Himself, as pure being. Indeed, he seems to doubt if the Deity has any intelligible meaning

[1] It is in the light of these tendencies that the significance of Ritschlianism is to be understood. On the one hand it is a protest against the severe intellectualism of Hegelianism, and on the other against the arid dogmatism of the theological system makers.

apart from our relation to Him, and separate from the representation of Him as given by Christ. The pressing question is, What is the value of God for us ? And the same is true of Christ. We approach God through one who has interpreted Him to us by means of our own life experiences. Christ therefore stands for God, and has therefore for us the value of God. This is what Ritschl means by that much disputed term *Werthurtheil*, or 'judgment of value.'[1] He does not mean that God is non-existent or a mere symbol or fancy. What he does mean is that His significance lies for us in the fact that He provides the blessings of redemption and love, without which man would be poor and helpless. We know Him by what He does for us.

God is not a mere philosophic idea, about which, as religious men, we may be indifferent. What He is metaphysically, as absolute, eternal, infinite, is a matter of trifling moment compared with the fact that He is known to us in His redemptive power. The Pragmatism of Ritschl's theology cannot be disguised, nor can the exaggerated subjectiveness of his teaching be accounted other than a flaw which contains the seeds of much that is unsatisfactory in the later tendencies of German theology. From his definition of Christianity as a means to an end, we can understand the stress which Ritschl puts upon the ethical or active elements of the religious life. The religious man is called to be a servant of Him who has redeemed him. "Faith in God and moral duty are inseparably associated."[2] He illustrates the relation by his famous simile of the ellipse. "Christianity, so to speak,

[1] Cf. *Recht und Vers.*, Eng. trans., p. 212. "Apart from this value-judgment of faith there exists no knowledge of God worthy of this century."

[2] *Recht und Vers.*, III., Eng. trans., p. 206.

resembles not a circle described from a single centre, but an *ellipse*, which is determined by two foci (*i.e.*, the religious conception of redemption, and the ethical conception of the Kingdom of God)." [1]

The Ritschlian interpretation of Christianity circles round three main ideas,—Redemption, the Kingdom of God and the Person of Christ.

1. While for Schleiermacher, Redemption exhausts itself in bringing about the proper relation between the individual soul and God, for Ritschl it is but the *means* to a larger end—the establishment of the Kingdom of God. With Schleiermacher the fundamental religious fact is the feeling of dependence on and union with God. With Ritschl, on the other hand, redemption is something practical; it is deliverance from evil, and entrance upon a growing life of freedom and service. The union with God which Schleiermacher posits at the beginning, is for Ritschl an ideal still to be realised, and a task still to be accomplished. Reconciliation, according to him, follows justification.

2. *The Kingdom of God* is contemplated as the end and purpose of Redemption. The object of Christ's salvation is not merely personal deliverance from sin, but the creation of a righteous society. Christ came to found a Church. Schleiermacher, as we have seen, also represents Christianity as a social religion. But in his view the community exists for the sake of the individual. Whereas with Ritschl the society is primary and paramount; and the individual's salvation but an instrument for the furtherance of the Kingdom. He speaks of the Kingdom of God as the "summum bonum" of Christianity.[2] It is a religious ideal, involving at once ethically a *gift* and a *task*, to be achieved through the obedience and service of men.

[1] *Idem*, iii. p. 11. [2] *Idem*, iii., Eng. trans., p. 30.

This constitutes what Ritschl calls man's 'vocation,' of which he becomes conscious as a redeemed Son of God.

3. For Ritschl, as for Schleiermacher, *Christ* is the central figure of Christianity. What Christianity is we know only from what Christ is. If we ask what Christ is, like everything else, our view must be stated in judgments of value. "He has for us the religious value of God." He redeems men by fulfilling perfectly the mission given Him to establish the Kingdom of God, and by patiently enduring all things, even unto death, for this end. Since the functions of Jesus are divine, He Himself is divine.[1] He has inaugurated a new relation between man and God, realizing it first in His own life and reproducing it in the life of all believers. He has brought inestimable blessings to mankind, beginning a new line of development, and proving a source of life and power in the world without parallel. To call Him divine, is, in Herrmann's phrase, "only to give Him His right name." It is useless to try to explain His significance in other terms. The question as to the 'two natures,' and the Trinitarian relation of the Son to the Father; ideas like the 'Absolute' or the Logos; conceptions of Pre-existence, or Exaltation and Eternal Life, have no religious meaning or importance. They lie wholly outside the domain of experience. The true proof of Christianity, Ritschl resolutely affirms, and the only one that can claim scientific validity, is Christian experience.[2] According to Ritschl's view, the sacrifice and death of Christ can have no objective significance as a propitiation for sin, by which it was

[1] "In the light of his benefactions we construct the dignity of his person."—Paterson, *Rule of Faith*, p. 380.

[2] *Ibid.*, Eng. trans., p. 24.

possible for God to receive sinners to mercy. The value of the death of Christ consists only in the fact that it is a power which continues to awaken the steadfast faith in God's love, the spirit of obedience and the sense of victory over the world. The terms 'priesthood' and 'sacrifice' are retained, but the only meaning is that Christ was the saviour because He manifested the spirit of Sacrifice in His life and passion. "Has Ritschl then," it has been pertinently asked, "no dynamic available, save the commonplace explanation of the older rationalism, that Jesus was the perfect exemplar of piety and virtue?"[1] "All that we can recognise as the real truth of His existence, is that through the impulse and direction we receive from Him it is possible for us to enter into His relation to God and the world."[2]

While one can hardly be oblivious to the deficiencies of Ritschl's interpretation of Christianity, it must also be acknowledged that his theology sets forth, as has been said, "a body of extremely important truths."[3] It is no small matter, to affirm anew the belief in a personal God whose essence is love, and who is revealed in terms of Jesus Christ: to be assured that He forgives the sins of those who repent and believe: and to hear His call to serve Him in His kingdom of righteousness in the fidelity of one's calling. Not only for his own age, but for ours, it is surely something that an exposition of Christianity accepted with so much respect and enthusiasm by theologians throughout the world should be based upon an unequivocal affirmation of the most positive elements of the Christian faith, and that it should place in a position at once

[1] Paterson, *Rule of Faith*, p. 379.
[2] *Justif. and Recon.*, p. 387.
[3] *Op. cit.*, *Rule of Faith*, p. 380.

central and supreme, the historical reality of Christ's person and work.

II

The influence of Ritschl is widespread. It has been felt not only in Germany but also in France, America and Britain. Among the most prominent adherents, may be cited Kaftan, Herrmann, Harnack, Reitschle, Bender, Joh. Weiss and H. H. Wendt. It would be hardly correct to include Seeberg and Grutzmacher, Cremer and Kaehler, in the same sense, and while Häring and Troeltsch gratefully acknowledge their indebtedness to the master for stimulus and suggestion, their theological writings exhibit a considerable amount of independence and dissent from his teaching. Yet, in all branches of the school, and amid all diversity of view, there is a striking unanimity in regard to the fresh interest which the problem has created since the appearance of Ritschl's treatise. And among theologians of every variety the question of the essence of Christianity has acquired a new importance and received much illuminating investigation.

The significance of the movement inaugurated by Schleiermacher and carried forward by Ritschl, is revealed in the evangelical character and positive tone which have been imparted to modern theological study. The cold, arid systems of dogmatism which prevailed before the time of Schleiermacher have received their death-blow, and the old negative and naturalistic explanations of Christian Revelation have been scrapped. Theologians are now concentrating their efforts upon the great cardinal truths of the Gospel. History and

experience are accounted important factors in the elucidation of the problem which the fact of Christ presents. A new meaning is attached to Neander's famous dictum, "Pectus est quod facit theologium," and it is felt that without sympathy and spiritual insight no man is truly qualified to treat of the things of God. The proud intellectualism and reliance upon formal logic of an earlier age have given place to a warmth and sincerity of heart, and devoutness of thought which are characteristic of the present attitude. This is specially true of the five or six greatest interpreters of Christianity in the field of German theology to-day. Harnack, Kaftan, Herrmann, Häring, Seeberg and Troeltsch are animated with a sense of the wonder and grandeur of the mystery of godliness, and are determined to rest satisfied with no cheap or easy escape from the challenge of Christian truth. The great question which these writers set themselves is, What is Christianity? Among the followers of Ritschl two tendencies disclose themselves—the tendency "to magnify the uniqueness of Christianity," as differing from all preceding forms of religion: and the tendency to emphasize its similarity with other faiths, and "see in Christianity the fulfilment and completion of the religious ideal," which before Christ had been more or less clearly revealed. Of these tendencies, Kaftan and Troeltsch are the leading representatives.[1] Christianity, according to Kaftan, is determined by two main thoughts—Redemption, and the Kingdom of God. In this he agrees with Ritschl, but he is unwilling to restrict religion to mere *Werthurtheile*. Judgments of value are based upon judgments of existence

[1] See Adams Brown, *Essence of Christianity*, p. 269 ff. See also Gunther, *DieEntwicklung d. Lehre von der Person Christi in XIX. Jahrhundert*, 1911, chap. "From Ritschl to Present Day."

—*Seinurtheile*.[1] It may be that we come to know God through His influence upon us. But knowing Him, we think of Him as self-existent. He is the *Absolute*. That term, the use of which is deprecated by Ritschl, is for Kaftan the most positive and spiritual of all conceptions. It denotes the Being who is "the ultimate end of all human striving and the supreme power over all reality."[2] The absoluteness which belongs to the Deity, belongs also to His Revelation in Christ. Christianity is essentially the supernatural religion, and stands forth in special and abiding contrast to all other religions. It is a new beginning, a miracle in the truest sense.

Here Troeltsch joins issue with Kaftan. He rejects Kaftan's interpretation of supernaturalism, and though fully acknowledging the uniqueness of Christianity, maintains that there is a supernatural element in all religion, and that therefore what we find in Christianity is but the fulfilment of the ideal that man in all ages has been striving after, but has only partially and imperfectly reached. There is much truth in Troeltsch's contention. Christianity is not a thing in the air, out of all relation to history, and to all that man has thought and striven for in the past. It is a completion as well as a new beginning. It at once vindicates and crowns God's revelation to man down the ages. It is only on the basis of history that we can find the 'standard' as revealed in the religious nature of man, according to which the content and meaning of Christianity can be ultimately estimated and explained. The true apologist, Troeltsch holds, is the student of comparative religion; and only on his foundation can a satisfactory dogmatic be reached. "Prophetic Christian Theism," as Troeltsch names

[1] *Dogmatik*, p. 29. [2] *Idem*, p. 161.

Christianity, in view of its fundamental and universal supremacy for civilization and progress, is a progressive dynamic, which is working through history to its self-fulfilment—" a productive and constructive movement of the forces of history itself." [1]

In the religious historical school of which Troeltsch is the leader and most able exponent, we may recognise a tendency to break with Ritschlianism, and an attempt to reconcile the views of Schleiermacher and Hegel by a synthesis of the intuitive and historical factors in religious interpretation.

III

But an even more fundamental question has been raised by the whole trend of theology from the time of Schleiermacher, through its development by Ritschl and his successors. It is the question of the *place of God* in modern theology. The problem that presents its challenge to the faith of our day is nothing less than the meaning of the Deity. When we try to get at the heart of religion we are forced to ask—What does our theology make of the Divine Being ? The old theological proofs of God have, since Kant's day, been discredited. But the theology that seeks to cut itself off from a metaphysical basis cannot long suffice to meet the deeper needs of our consciousness. It is, in short, the question whether our attitude to reality is to be " theocentric or anthropocentric." Are we to begin our investigation with God or man ? It is not, however, a matter merely of dogmatic procedure and method.

[1] See W. R. Thomson, *The Christian Idea of God*, pp. 163 ff, where an interesting account is given of Troeltsch's theological position and influence; also, Mezger's *Absolutheit des Christentums*, p. 24 f.

It is a question which affects our whole *Weltanschauung* and view of life. For theology has to do primarily with God, and all our lines of study must eventually converge on Him. Modern thought is committed to a reconsideration of its attitude to God. If theology is to be a true guide and interpreter of life, then it must become once more as it was in the earlier philosophical and theological systems—theocentric.

In certain schools of theology in Germany since the time of Schleiermacher, there has been a steady tendency towards what is called an anthropocentric, instead of a theocentric, view of God and the world. The old centre of gravity has been changed. The God-centred conception of the universe has been displaced by an exaggerated subjectivism. God has become the *means*, man the end. The Deity is regarded as existing solely for the benefit of the world, and as if He had a value and meaning only as furthering the interests of human life. In this connection attention may be called to a timely work by Professor Erich Schaeder of Kiel, entitled, *Theozentrische Theologie*,[1] in which the author criticises this movement, which, he says, "brings inconsistency and disorder into the whole field of religious thought." The cause of this transference of the centre of gravity from God to man, he ascribes to Schleiermacher, who finds the germ of religion in the feeling of dependence, the deep sense of need on the part of man. Instead of faith looking directly to God as it does in Scripture, we have thought fixed on 'man's own state.' Instead of saying "I believe in God," man says, "I believe in my own feelings, my

[1] In two volumes, the first published in 1909, and the second in 1914. See references to this movement in W. R. Thomson, *The Christian Conception of God*, p. 20 ff. See also the present writer's account of Schaeder's book in *Rev. of Theol. and Phil.* May, 1914.

consciousness, my need." But, argues Schaeder, why not begin with God ? Save for Him and His revelation to us through Christ we should never know our need, nor be conscious of our dependence. Schaeder traces this 'perverted' idea down the whole course of recent theology. It is disclosed in what is called the 'Experience theology,' the Erlangen School, of which Hofmann and Frank were the most illustrious representatives. It is, say these writers, only through the subjective consciousness of a new life or 'a regenerate ego' that the Christian comes to know God, or even Christ. And from the starting-point of the New Birth, an entirely subjective condition, the believer argues his way back to God and the redeeming acts described in Scripture. Thus the historical and objective truth of Christianity is minimised. "The 'New Ego' is an uncertain changeable quantity." The man who thus rests his faith in God upon the basis of self-consciousness, stands in perpetual danger of his faith growing feeble or entirely disappearing in doubt. In like manner, the theology of Seeberg and Grutzmacher is pronounced imperfect. 'The modern positive spirit,' as the tendency represented by these two writers is named, while uttering a clear testimony to its belief in the historical Jesus, emphasizes 'the inner experience' of faith and love, the personal emotions of the believing and loving ego—as the essential elements of Christianity. Only such historical facts are considered important as rouse in the believer these qualities—faith and love. But this, says Schaeder, is nothing more or less than the anthropocentric attitude which exalts the human at the expense of the divine, and makes man the measure of God. The attitude of the 'Biblicists,' as represented by Cremer and Kaehler, reveals again the same false emphasis.

The starting-point of the Biblicists is the sense of moral responsibility, the awakened conscience roused in the present-day believer by contact with the believers of Scriptural times. In other words, it is not the truths of revelation, not God and Christ in their direct appeal, but the witness of those personages who were in intimate touch with Christ long ago, which becomes for us to-day a kind of historical nexus of Biblical reference. In the *Conscience Theology* of Cremer the accent falls upon the *sense of sin* mediated to us through men of Scriptural times whom Christ convicted and saved. "The Bible," says Kaehler also, "is before all else a human witness. Men of old confessed their sins, declared their faith and found their God," and we through them attain to a like conviction. But, here says Schäder, the mere *value for us* of God and of Christ is in danger of being over-emphasized. If the whole value of God consists in bringing home to us the sense of Sin, and even making us aware of Salvation, then again He is but a *means* to an end—an instrumental Deity. But surely God exists for Himself and not for us alone. It is not so much our conscience that reveals God, as God that reveals our conscience. It is not sin that discovers Christ: it is Christ who discovers sin. There is a tendency in Cremer's theology to identify Scripture with God. God is simply reduced to an element in the Bible. We do not seem to see God enthroned above the Bible, as its Sovereign and Lord using it as His instrument.

The Biblicist theory is mechanical, allowing nothing for the evolution of consciousness and the growth and development of the moral and spiritual life of man. Schäder is not so successful, as it seems to us, in bringing Kaehler under his strictures. In some aspects Kaehler is in agreement with Cremer and Ihmels,

but his theology runs on broader lines and is not confined to the mere question of the assurance of salvation, as Cremer's largely is. His theology may be styled a 'theology of grace' (*Gnaden-theologie*). The central thought is justification—God in His mercy. But, says Schäder, this idea of the grace of God is not wholly objective: the grace of God seems to be mediated through the Bible account of it. Is there not here once more, asserts Schäder, a tendency in Kaehler to interpose between us and God the experiences and testimonies of men of bygone times? Our faith is made to depend upon the reproduction of the faith of others. We are dependent for our knowledge of God's grace upon tradition, the Bible records and the Church. Hence, says Schäder, Kaehler falls like the others of the Ritschlian School under the error of anthropocentrism. This tendency, however, is not peculiar to Kaehler or the others named. It is patent in the entire modern treatment of theology which owes its inspiration to the teaching of Ritschl. But, as Schäder is continually reiterating, God does not exist for us: we exist for God. He cannot be brought into our narrow subjective value-schemes. He cannot be subsumed under our human categories. The dominant feature in God is that of sovereignty, of power. God is God, absolute sovereign over us and the whole universe. That is the aspect invariably presented to us in the teaching of Jesus. This point of view has been powerfully advocated by another writer, in agreement with Schäder. In a recent volume, W. Lütgert [1] affirms that according to Jesus, God is not the servant or instrument of man who exists simply to advance the personal good of the individual.

[1] See *Natur und Geist Gottes*, Professor W. Lütgert, 1910, p. 5 ff.

On the contrary, according to the teaching of Christianity, *man* is here to serve *God*, and bring to Him fruit. It is not man who gives value to God: it is God who gives value to man. The Lordship of God is the final article of Jesus' faith, the burden of all His Gospel.

Ritchlianism has been described by Gunther, in the work already referred to,[1] as pre-eminently "the theology of Personality." And the individualistic ego-centric element in it is unmistakable. But it is only fair to say all Ritschl's followers are not equally tinged with the anthropocentric error. Kaftan and Lipsius, and most of all, Tröltsch, have broken away from the narrowing limits of individualism and taken a larger, broader reach.

Häring's position is interesting. In the great work, *The Christian Faith*, which has been lately translated, he has given a splendid and convincing tribute to the truth of the Gospel, and has enthroned Christ in the central position, not of the individual soul merely, but of cosmic reality. The whole work is controlled by Jesus' Revelation of the supreme Fatherhood of God. For religious men the one point worth getting answered is whether the love and power once manifested in the flesh is really at the heart of things, and is waiting to break through the veil and take possession of the Soul. Most emphatically Häring refuses to make theology dependent on science or philosophy, though not unwilling to enlarge its scope and compass by all that modern culture can teach. He recognises that Christianity, though once given, is a growing and progressive consecration and domination of the whole of life. He faces fearlessly the problems

[1] *Die Entwicklung der Lehre von der Person Christi in XIX. Jahrhundert.*

which are exercising the modern mind. While the Gospel is unchanging as the love of God, the scientific interpretation of it, by which it is related to the growing content of knowledge, must change and develop. It is this calm progressiveness that is the distinctive mark of Häring's work. The central truth on which he insists is that Christians believe in God as they believe in Christ. In Him they see and touch the eternal. Häring belongs to a group of men who, more than a quarter of a century ago, gathered around Albert Ritschl and received their impulse from him. But it soon became apparent that Häring was to be no echo of another—and while he does not disown his debt to his teacher, he goes his own way and looks at reality with the sincerity and freshness of an original mind.

More than most modern writers, Häring is free from the one-sided subjective note. He is well aware of the charge which Schäder has brought against the Ritschlian School. He does not seem wholly comfortable under it, and a large part of his introduction is devoted to a vindication of his own position, and a plea for an element of subjectivism in all theological study. He truly says that even a wholly theocentric theology "cannot set aside the confirmation which we have in the form of our own experience." [1] And, however jealously we guard the absoluteness of God, we must approach Him from our own personal experience. It is to *our* faith He appeals, and certainly from the point of view of Ethics, the furtherance of life becomes for us at least, a vital conception.

Moreover, as Häring contends, on the score of method and arrangement, in the treatment of theology the starting-point from experience is preferable to the old

[1] *Idem*, vol. i. pp. 38 ff.

abstract way of beginning with the proof and attributes of God, provided only that we make it clear that we are not concerned with our subjective experiences alone as an isolated and ultimate fact, but only as leading up to the reality of God. In this respect psychology and the history of religious experience, he maintains, have an incomparable value for the meaning of religion. "The new study," says Häring, "has shed light upon so many questions hitherto dark that even its most active opponents are beginning to use the light it offers." But, on the other hand, we ought not to be blind to its extravagances. There is an obvious danger of estimating religious ideas by statistics of "pathological" facts—a danger which so skilful an investigator as William James did not wholly avoid. How little mere psychology and the study of subjective states of feeling are capable of offering real proofs of the truth of religion, the vagaries of American Emotionalism reveal.

In his second and more constructive volume, Schäder contends strongly for a new departure in theological study. "Not God for us, but we for God," must be the new watchword. The conception of service, of the human surrender to the will of God—that alone can correct the exaggerated idea of self that has entered into modern theology. We are here to place our entire selves and all our powers at the disposal of God. The goal of our being is not happiness or personal satisfaction, nor even Salvation, but the Glory of our Lord and Sovereign. This ought to be the dominant idea even of Christian Ethics, as it was the ruling thought of Christ.[1] Only such an ethic can make room for, and give justification to, a proper understanding of social service. So long as moral

[1] Lütgert, *Idem.*, p. 115 f.

activity finds its goal in our own persons, will the treatment of morals be narrow, individualistic and utilitarian. But when the sovereignty and power of God becomes the end, there will arise the conception of life as Stewardship, and, as Bosanquet would say, of man as a trustee of the Absolute. There will, moreover, dawn upon those who have been reconciled to God, the vital and far-reaching thought, that they have in God alone, a common life and a common will and purpose, which demand reciprocal service as well as united action. This sense of a common relation to God will give a new motive and meaning to labour. It will elevate and transform our ordinary tasks, and bring to the obligations of brotherhood and human endeavour the sanctions of perennial joy and enthusiasm.[1]

While there is much that is suggestive in Schäder's contentions, one feels that he has over-strained a valuable truth—both in the strictures he has made on the writings of others and in some of the inferences he has drawn. Is there not a sense in which it may be held that God *is* for us as well as we for God? May it not be argued that His power is truly revealed in service, and that the glory of the divine is revealed in sacrifice? In over-emphasizing the Theocentric Conception, is there not a danger of conceiving God as a lifeless abstraction—a blank featureless entity? The interaction of these two movements, the metaphysical and the religious, may be traced through all the successive stages of theological effort. Indeed, it is not too much to say that the doctrine of the Trinity, as shaped by human thought, is but the expression of man's attempt to harmonize the philosophical and religious conceptions of God, and to satisfy the claims of reality both on

[1] Schäder, vol. ii. p. 317.

the divine and the human side. Mr. Balfour's recent work, *Theism and Humanism*, has, in this reference, a special interest. Mr. Balfour faces the old difficulty of reconciling Personality and Absolutism. He refuses to adopt any theory of the divine nature that isolates God from man, and leaves Him in the cold independence of pure being. He cannot surrender a God "who hears prayers and takes sides," and whose fullness of life and joy is somehow dependent upon man's response. Of God, as of His Son, may it not be said—"He shall see of the travail of His Soul and be satisfied"?

If we have dwelt too long upon Schäder's criticism of modern theology, our apology must be, he has voiced a growing conviction in many of the best minds to-day, that there is need for a more objective dogmatic, and a theology more firmly based upon a sound metaphysic. We must avoid the danger of religious Pragmatism, which represents the divine Being as merely an instrument or factor of the human will, existing solely for the furthering of man's interests. The teaching of Calvin in this respect may well be revived. In spite of his limitations in regard to Election and Fore-ordination, it is distinctive of the Genevan divine that he grasped the grandeur of the idea of divine Sovereignty, and set in the forefront of his theology a God at once transcendent and immanent, working out His purpose in and through all creation, binding and overruling all things earthly and heavenly in one great living organism. This sublime conception, which is essentially the Pauline one, alone gives us an acceptable philosophy of history and an intelligible clue to the mystery of life. It may be said that the idealistic philosophy culminating in Hegel, whatever may be its shortcomings in other respects—a philosophy which Ritschl and his school so persistently disparage—

deserves our recognition, if for nothing else, for this at least, that it is a real endeavour of the human mind to grasp the stupendous idea of God, as at once Absolute and Eternal, and also related to and revealed in the manifold in time of life and history.

CHAPTER XIV

NEWMAN AND THE TRACTARIAN MOVEMENT

At the opening of the nineteenth century throughout the whole of Western Europe there was a general revolution of thought to which the name of Romanticism has been given. It affected Britain not less than the countries of the Continent, and bore fruit in the religious as well as the political life of the age. The first and most influential representative of this tendency in England was Coleridge, whose *Aids to Reflection*, published in 1825, was the means of interpreting German idealistic philosophy to English thought. In Coleridge, as in Schleiermacher, his German predecessor, faith and knowledge were so interwoven that, as Pfleiderer says,[1] he appeared, on the one hand, as the apologist of the traditions of the Church in antagonism to extreme rationalism ; and, on the other, as the champion of an advanced liberalism in opposition to conservative orthodoxy. These two aspects of thought, combined in Coleridge, gave rise to two distinct parties in the English Church which, almost simultaneously, became powerful antagonists, and greatly influenced the current of religious thought.

In this chapter we shall describe shortly the history and significance of what is known as the 'Oxford'

[1] *Development of Theology*, p. 355.

or 'Tractarian' Movement; and in the following chapter give some account of the 'Liberal' or 'Broad' Church party, which, though existing as early as the Tractarian Movement, did not attain to its full strength till the power of the latter had begun to decline.

I

The Tractarian Movement may be described generally as a revolt against the religious and political liberalism of the time. At the end of the eighteenth century religious life was decadent, due partly to the deadening influence of Deism, and partly to the spirit of enquiry which was affecting every realm of thought. Newman speaks of "the dry and superficial character of the religious teaching of last century," and of "the need felt by both the hearts and intellects of the nation for a deeper philosophy." [1] The Oxford Movement, in its earlier phases at least, was part of the wider awakening to the reality of life of which Coleridge and Wordsworth, Sir Walter Scott and Thomas Carlyle were in different ways the instigators. It is true the Evangelical revival at the end of the century did something to prepare the way on the religious side. But the Evangelicals were not thinkers; and on account of their narrow individualism, were powerless to stem the tide of religious indifference or meet the deeper needs of the spirit. The Oxford movement was more than a religious agitation. It arose also as a reaction against the growing ascendancy of political liberalism. In any just estimate of the religious tendencies of the time it would be impossible to neglect the political factor. "It was one of those periods," says J. A.

[1] *Apologia*, p. 95.

Froude, writing of his brother's share in what he calls the 'Oxford counter-Reformation,' "when Conservative England had been seized with a passion for reform. Parliament was to be reformed; the municipal institutions were to be reformed; and there was to be an end of monopolies and privileges. The Constitution was to be cut to pieces and boiled in the Benthamite caldron. My brother and his friends abhorred Bentham and all his works. The establishment in its existing state was too weak to do battle with the new enemy. Protestantism was the chrysalis of liberalism. The Church therefore was to be unprotestantized. The Reformation, my brother said, was a bad setting of a broken limb. The limb needed breaking a second time, and then it would be equal to its business."[1] The new spirit found expression in the repeal of the 'Test or Corporation Acts' of 1828; in the 'Catholic Emancipation Act' of 1829, and the 'Reform Bill' of 1832. The Church found itself threatened by a State which cynically disregarded all differences of belief and seemed determined to destroy all privilege. When at last, in 1833, it was proposed to suppress ten Irish bishoprics, with a hint that a similar procedure might be applied to England, the Anglican party was roused to action in defence of the sanctity of its heritage. Keble gave voice to the feeling of indignation in a sermon on 'National Apostacy' preached in the university pulpit at Oxford on the 14th of July, 1833. That sermon, according to Newman, marks the birthday of the movement. "I have ever considered and kept the day as the start of the religious movement of 1833"[2]

But if Keble's sermon was the spark which

[1] *Short Studies*, vol. iv. p. 236. [2] *Apologia*, p. 35.

lit the fire the fuel had already been collected and prepared some years before. The dissatisfaction existed, and there was a coterie of conservative churchmen who thought that not only the Establishment but religion itself was in danger. The movement was not a new or sudden thing; nor was it a merely negative agitation, as it has been sometimes represented. The men of Oxford denied that they were innovators. They claimed to be the restorers of the ancient ways. It is but fair to say that the agitation was not simply a protest against political disintegration. It was the formulation of a great reconstructive effort. Before the eyes of the leaders there floated a high ideal, a conception of the Church as a divine institution that had been ordained of Christ and handed down the ages as the heritage of believers. The Reformation had rent the unity of Christendom, and the Protestant pioneers were the great schismatics. Purged of the false leaven of Protestantism, possessed of her consciousness of Apostolic Succession, strong in her sense of her priesthood, inviolate in her sacraments, her ritual and dogma, derived from the fountainhead, the Anglican Church must rise up afresh to vindicate and exercise the authority committed to her of old by the original mandate of the Apostolic age.

II

It was the personal element, however, even more than the political which gave to the manifestation its character and force. The leaders were men of strong passion, of high idealism and marked individuality. John Keble, Richard Hurrell Froude, and John Henry Newman were the guiding spirits during

the first years. But Froude's early death in 1836 deprived the movement of his help. His place was afterwards filled by Dr. Pusey. They were all Oxford students, mostly young men of culture and intellectual distinction. Their influence was exerted chiefly from within the precincts of the university. Keble was the mystic of the circle, saint and poet. He was little fitted by nature or acquirements to be a leader. A plain, unworldly country parson, he united piety with scholarship, amiability of temperament with rigidity of moral principle. He held strong views as a churchman, had great veneration for the established forms of worship and "a great dislike of Rome, of dissent and Methodism." But his ideas would probably have remained inoperative had they not been taken up and developed by men of greater energy and initiative than he possessed. His outlook upon life seems to have been narrow. He idolized the Church of England, but he had no sympathy with any form of truth outside the Anglican pale of thought. With all his inflexible integrity and gentleness of nature there was in his character an undoubted strain of intolerance and bigotry. He is now chiefly remembered as the author of *The Christian Year*, first published in 1827. In its tender and gracious verses are enshrined those gifts of poetic symbolism and spiritual suggestiveness which have found a response in so many hearts. He has been styled "the English Novalis," the poet of religious idealism, to whose vision "two worlds lie always open, the visible being the type of the invisible." [1] But even in his poetry he lacks largeness of vision. He identifies piety almost exclusively with the beliefs and ceremonies of the Anglican Church. He is the poet of sacra-

[1] Pfleiderer, *op. cit.* p. 356.

mentarianism. We look in vain to him for any insight into the intricate problems of life or any sympathy with the throbbing emotions of the human soul. The *Christian Year* is, however, a landmark in the history of the time. It made a profound impression upon Newman, even before he knew its author, and did much to direct his thoughts to the symbolical and mystic elements in faith which became afterwards the staple of his teaching. It is not improbable indeed that the verses of Keble did more to win for the movement the sympathy of the ordinary mind than all the subsequent tractates and learned arguments by which its advocates sought to propagate their tenets.

Richard Hurrell Froude was a different type—a man of action rather than a philosopher. "Gifted, brilliant, enthusiastic, an intellectual autocrat"—so his brother describes him. Newman speaks of him as "a man of high genius, brimful and overflowing with ideas and views . . . which crowded and jostled one another in their effort after distinct shape and expression."[1] The two volumes of *Remains* published in 1836, bear out these impressions, "but the faults of his genius," says Tulloch, "are even more conspicuous than the merits." "The volumes are full of violent misjudgments, riotous prejudice, silly introspection, and here and there, of downright nonsense."[2] It is difficult to understand how Newman could lend his name to their publication; and still more difficult to conceive how he could in any way be influenced by a man of such crudeness of view and arrogance of opinion as Froude seems to have been. Yet we have it on record by Newman's own

[1] *Apologia*, chap. i. p. 24.

[2] Tulloch, *Movements of Religious Thought*, p. 96.

confession that "it is difficult to enumerate the precise addition to my theological creed which I derived from a friend to whom I owe so much. He made me look with admiration towards the Church of Rome and in the same degree to dislike the Reformation. He fixed deep in me the idea of devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and he led me gradually to believe in the real presence."[1] This passage is surely as remarkable for the light it sheds upon the discrimination of Newman's judgment as it is illuminative of the origin of his Romish tendencies. Had Froude lived there is no doubt as to his terminus. He was already making straight for Rome; and 'no subtleties and nice distinctions,' as in the case of Newman, stood in his way. That he influenced Newman in that direction can only be understood in the sense that Newman, though he himself was not wholly conscious of it, was already well on the Romeward path. It was Froude, we are told, who brought Keble and Newman together. Keble was Froude's tutor; and though of diverse nature master and scholar had much in common. Both were tories and High Churchmen of the narrowest type. At a time when Newman was passing out of the influence of Whately and the 'Noetic School' among whom his youth had been spent, Keble's ideas, reproduced and intensified by Froude, had a powerful effect upon the unsettled mind of Newman. In the year 1832, with Froude as his companion, Newman set out on his famous European tour, and there are indications that even then his thoughts were turning towards the Church of Rome. Froude tells us that while in Rome they visited Monsignor Wiseman "to find out whether they (the Roman authorities) would take

[1] *Apologia*, chap. i. p. 25.

us in on any terms to which we could twist our consciences." Though Newman mentions the visit to Wiseman he makes no reference, as Froude does, to the object of it. He acknowledges that he was in a state of extreme unrest; "inwardly fretted," is his phrase. He had a strong desire to get home. "For want of a vessel I was kept at Palermo for three weeks. . . . At last I got off in an orange-boat for Marseilles. We were becalmed a whole week in the Straits of Bonefacio. Then it was I wrote the lines 'Lead Kindly Light.'" He reached England on Tuesday, 9th July. On the following Sunday Mr. Keble preached the assize sermon already referred to. Little wonder that it found response in the heart of the traveller. He was 'being led'—but it was on a path of his own choosing, though perhaps he only dimly knew it.

The strongest man of the party, with the exception of Newman himself, was Pusey. Less brilliant and versatile than some of his associates he held a more eminent position as a scholar and man of affairs than the rest of the group. By many who were not a little distrustful of the complexities of Newman's mind he was regarded as a man of unequivocal rectitude. He was not wholly antagonistic to the Liberal party, even acknowledging that the Rationalists might be in possession of the "earnestness and love of God." But he had a stronger regard for the Evangelicals whom he professed to "love because of their zeal for souls." He had studied in Germany, and was the only member of the circle who was directly acquainted with German theology. The remark has been imputed to Mark Pattison, but was really made by Dean Stanley, that had Newman known German the Oxford Movement would never have taken place or at least would

have taken an entirely different course. The result of Pusey's German study is published in a volume now somewhat rare, entitled *An Historical Inquiry into the Probable Causes of the Rationalistic Character of German Theology.* The object of this interesting and well-informed book, valuable as a guide even to-day, was not to vindicate Rationalism but to defend some manifestations of it in Germany against the indiscriminate assault made upon it in a work entitled *The State of Protestantism in Germany* by Hugh James Rose. Rose's volume has been highly eulogized by Newman.[1] But judging by the extracts quoted by Pusey it would appear to have been a biased and unreliable production, misleading as to facts and intolerant in spirit. Pusey's work, on the other hand, is eminently fair and broad-minded, and not without appreciation of what is good and helpful in Continental thought. Pusey was denounced as a friend of Rationalism. Yet the most superficial reader of the book could not possibly draw such an inference.

The accession of Pusey to their ranks was an enormous gain to the Tractarians, both because of his status as professor of Hebrew and his intimate relations with the University authorities. "Dr. Pusey," says Newman, "gave us a position and a name." A 'name' certainly he did give them, for henceforth the movement was known as 'Puseyism'—a title which gradually superseded all others and indicated the reverence and distinction with which the scholar's personality was regarded. It was not, however, until the year 1835, when there appeared his memorable 'Tracts' on Baptism—tracts which attained the dimensions of a treatise—that his influence was thrown

[1] The present writer has not seen Rose's volume, though full extracts are given by Pusey in *op. cit.*

wholly on the side of the High Church party. As time went on, and as he became more and more embroiled in the Tractarian Controversy, his clearness and impartiality of judgment seemed to desert him; and it is a very different picture of the old man defending a declining cause with fierce and lonely ardour which we receive from the pages of Mrs. Humphry Ward's recent recollections.

III

But the real leader of the movement was Newman himself. The story of its genesis and development is the story of the mental history of a single man. Pusey and Keble, Froude and Ward, are but subsidiary figures in the picture. Newman remains throughout the central personality. "The rest were all ciphers," writes J. A. Froude, "and he is the indicating number."[1]

"To him, if to any man, the world owes the intellectual recovery of Romanism. Fifty years ago[2] it was in England a dying creed lingering in retirement in the halls and chapels of a few half-forgotten families. A shy Oxford student has come out on its behalf into the field of controversy armed with the keenest weapons of learning and philosophy; and wins illustrious converts, and has kindled hopes that England herself, the England of Elizabeth and Cromwell, will kneel for absolution again before the father of Christendom. Mr. Buckle questioned whether any great work has ever been done in this world by an individual man. Newman, by the solitary force of his own mind, has produced this extraordinary

[1] *Short Studies*, iv. p. 270. [2] Written in 1881.

change. . . . Newman has been the voice of the intellectual reaction of Europe." What was the secret of his influence? What is it that makes this man one of the outstanding names of modern English history? Many have attempted to analyse this many-sided complex personality and to valuate the traits of his life and work. His contemporaries have striven with one another to depict the man as he lived and thought. His theological writings tell us something. His poetry affords many glimpses of the inner mysticism of his mind. More than all else his *Apologia*, 'the most beautiful of Biographies' discloses the stages of his mental and spiritual history. But it can only tell how the writer of it appeared to himself; and it conceals even more than it reveals. It has been truly said that a man of letters is either much less or much greater than his writings. No man of great genius can put all of himself into a book. There are indeed passages in Newman's works which are noted not only for their clear, limpid style, almost incomparable in English literature, but also for their profound personal illumination—turns of sentences, pictures of vivid insight, felicities of language quivering with passion and meaning—which are veritable revelations of the soul. Some of his religious poems are unique in this sense. They have not the grace of the *Christian Year*. They are often irregular, fierce, tragic. But they contain thoughts that pierce to the inmost marrow. What a mirror of his own heart and what a challenge to the faith of others these words flash forth:

> "Christian, wouldst thou learn to love,
> First learn thee how to hate."

The awfulness of life weighed upon him. Whatever he was he was no hypocrite. He wanted to get at

the realities which live behind all appearances and his life was a quest for the ultimate spring. Critics have spoken of the disingenuousness of his character. He has been charged with subtlety and even with sophistry. Charles Kingsley, in the notorious controversy which became so personal and fierce on both sides, accused him of justifying deceit and duplicity. But Kingsley, eminently simple and straight-forward yet somewhat categorical and lacking in the appreciation of the nuages of truth and the finer lights and shades of reality, had not the gift to understand such a man as Newman. Newman was often wrong, but he never defended wrong-doing. He was often self-deceived, but he was never wilfully deceitful. The fact is that just because he was the most earnest of men he was also the most transparent of men. He believed that he had a mission and that it was the task of his life to lead back his countrymen to the true source of authority. He had no personal ambitions. Never was a man so keenly introspective and almost morbidly analytical of his motives. Yet right for him was right. He was slow to make up his mind, but once he decided, resolute and dogged, as if impelled in each step he took by a force within, but greater than, himself. A temper disdainful of conventions, reckless of opinion, imperious and reserved, carried him along to the fulfilment of his destiny. His was the over-mastery of faith. He believed in his message and in himself as its bearer. In the main he was a solitary soul, standing aloof in his struggles and aspirations. No one knew, he himself did not know, whither his convictions would carry him. Gracious and sympathetic though he was towards others, when truth was at stake none could be more unbending. As a leader he was autocratic and

imperious. His ascendancy, so far as it can be computed, lay in the force and fascination of the intensity of his own faith, in the dominating loyalty of his manhood to what he saw to be the truth. He became the embodiment of many a man's creed. "Credo in Newmannum" was a common phrase in Oxford.

IV

We must glance for a moment at the object of Newman and his friends, and the methods they adopted to promulgate their views. The Oxford movement has been described as an attempt to counteract the growing spirit of Liberalism by restoring the power of the Church as the source of order and stability. The Church was held to be God's appointed instrument for the guidance and safeguarding of the national life. On the Continent a similar reaction in favour of the principle of divine authority had taken place—a reaction signalised by the publication of Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme* and embodied in what is known as the Romantic School. The scepticism of the Encyclopedists had done its destructive work. The political convulsions of 1793 had imparted a new seriousness to European civilisation. Britain had also participated in this revival. But while the more earnest spirits of the Continent looked to the Church of Rome as their hope, the men of Oxford saw in a reawakened Church of England the vehicle of life and inspiration. They believed that there belonged to the native institution all the elements of authority possessed by the Romanists. The 'notes' of the true Church everywhere are "Apostolicity, Catholicity, and Autonomy." These, they held, were eminently

present in the Anglican Communion. The Church was one. No hard and fast line could be drawn between the Church of Rome and the Church of England. There was a unity and continuity of spirit, doctrine, and worship, which bound the faith of the first century with the faith of to-day. The most important condition in the eyes of the Tractarians was the doctrine of Apostolic Succession. All other Sacramentarian 'signs' naturally follow. Their object, therefore, was to rehabilitate the Church and restore it in the hearts of the people to its historical position of supremacy and authority. But the old Church must be made attractive and be presented in such a way as to draw all the nation to her as the true home and haven of believers. To revive the past, therefore, to recover the romance and splendour of the Middle Ages as exhibited in ritual and ceremony, music and architecture, became the aim of the new departure. The norm and pattern of true religion for them lay far back in those olden days before a crude and uncouth Protestantism laid its vulgar secularizing hands upon the ark of God. It was a second Reformation, a renascence of the Church in all its pristine splendour and authority for which the party contended.

For a year or two the new idealism worked as a leaven in the hearts of the elect few, but it left the multitudes untouched. Newman's greatest influence was exerted from the pulpit of St. Mary's at Oxford. The service was simple and unostentatious. But the thought uttered on those quiet, memorable afternoons touched the heart of unseen things. While the teaching at St. Mary's was primarily ethical and spiritual, appealing to the conscience, the theological basis of the movement was developed in a series of lectures given to a select audience in De Brome's side chapel.

In these lectures, afterwards published in *Romanism and Popular Protestantism* Newman traced out the *Via Media* taken by the Anglicans of the seventeenth century between the theology of Rome and the theology of Geneva. But if the movement was to gain ground something more direct and practical must be done. Newman therefore hit upon the idea of the *Tracts for the Times* which became the distinctive and determinative feature of the effort. It brought the matter "down from the study to the street." Of the ninety tracts issued over twenty of them dealt with the central theme of Apostolic Succession and the others treated of cognate subjects. The authors were numerous, but Newman himself wrote a large proportion and supervised all of them. Pusey wrote five, including No. 79 on Baptism, in which he attacked the Evangelical doctrine of regeneration through faith, attributing supreme importance to the outward rite. All the tracts were strongly Romanistic. "From the beginning of 1836 the world outside Oxford," Dean Church tells us,[1] "began to be alive to the force and rapid growth of this new, and to the world at large, not very intelligible movement. The ideas which laid hold so powerfully of a number of leading minds in the university began to work with a spell, which seemed to many inexplicable, on others." Principal Tulloch caustically remarks that "as we read them now, or try to read them, it seems strange that they should ever have moved any number of minds. They must have been dull reading even at that time." The only explanation seems to be that men felt the need of some kind of reawakening. The Evangelical Revival was on its ebb. The old Tory Anglicanism was inert and formal. The Liberalism of the Whately

[1] *The Oxford Movement*, p. 171.

type was shallow, severely logical, and had failed to touch the Church as a whole. The Tracts therefore met a religious want in the aspiration of the time.[1] They made men think, they awakened enquiry. But the *Via Media* commended by Newman did not satisfy some of the more alert and keenly questioning spirits of the day. Maurice, Stanley, Mark Pattison, though at first attracted, became restive and critical. Others like W. G. Ward and Frederick Faber were deeply impressed, but wanted to go further, and they began to urge Newman to declare himself and come boldly out on the side of Rome. His followers detected a note of hesitation in their master's utterances. It became impossible for him to refrain any longer from taking a definite line on the more urgent questions. While the younger enthusiasts were trying to drive him onwards in the direction of Rome the more cautious were asking how the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England could be reconciled with the view of the Church which the Tractarians presented. The Articles were plainly Protestant ; yet the High Church party maintained that they were Catholic and almost identical with the dogmas of the Roman Church. In the course of 1840 the matter was so insistently pressed upon the attention of Newman that he resolved to deal with it explicitly ; and it formed the theme of the famous Tract 90, which marked the final phase of the movement.

It is unnecessary to dwell particularly on the arguments set forth in this new vindication. There are few who would now affirm that its line of thought is at all illuminating or convincing. It is subtle, ingenious indeed, but specious, hardly escaping the charge, which some of Newman's opponents made,

[1] *Movements of Religious Thought*, p. 108.

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE LINCOLN

of being sophistical. Newman wrought hard to defend the *Via Media* between Romanism and Protestantism by trying to exhibit the essential agreement between Anglican doctrine and the position of the early Fathers. But the attempt only excited a strong revulsion of public opinion. The tract was censured by the university authorities. Many friends withdrew from the party, though some of the most ardent, abandoning all reserve, went over boldly to Rome. Newman soon found his position untenable. He ceased to preach at St. Mary's and retired to Littlemore. He did not even yet contemplate the necessity of leaving the Church of England. But several events occurring about this time discrediting the theory for which he had contended—the setting up of a dual Bishopric in Jerusalem, the failure on account of his tractarian sympathies of Isaac Williams to obtain the Chair of Poetry in succession to Keble, the suspension of Pusey as university preacher in condemnation of his sermon on the *Holy Eucharist,* and the censure of Ward's book on the *Ideal of the Christian Church*—all tended to open his eyes to the inevitable. He came at last to realise whither his principles were leading him. In the summer of 1844 he preached his last sermon as an Anglican. Within the year Newman was admitted into the Church of Rome.

V

The after-history of Newman does not here concern us. All the world knows how in the new communion he speedily attained to the status and dignity of Cardinal. At the Oratory of Birmingham he led a retired, almost ascetic life of deep piety. After his

conversion to Rome he published several works which have helped to elucidate his position and to throw light upon the movement of which he was the dominant spirit. Among these may be named: *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845) and *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (1870). In the former he seeks to show that Christianity like every other institution has undergone a process of growth in doctrine and tradition, and was not given to the world at once in its final and perfected form. It is therefore a delusion to maintain, as the Protestant theory does, that all its doctrines and practices are directly deducible from Scripture. But forgetting that the Church itself is the subject of development and undergoes changes in its evolution, he arrives at the contradictory conclusion that in order to guide the process of development, to distinguish the false from the true, there is required an infallible authority outside of the process—an authority which he holds to be none other than the Church! In the latter essay he elaborates a principle which he learned from Keble, viz. that religious conviction does not rest on intellectual but rather on emotional grounds, which cannot be theoretically proved. He thus commits himself to a species of subjective agnosticism which we regret to see being revived in our time. Newman would have had no sympathy with the school of Spencer or even the teaching of Schleiermacher, if even he knew of their dogmatic positions; but one may see here how men starting from different standpoints, when they attempt to suppress any element in the wholeness of their rational consciousness, do injustice to the full objectivity of truth and inevitably land themselves in some form of scepticism.

The *Apologia*, as we have already said, is the story

of a soul's struggle. Of its honesty as an earnest attempt to unveil his real self there can be no doubt. Unquestionably there stands out from its pages a personality of sterling integrity. But the weakness of the man cannot be disguised. He was haunted with a moral fear. He cannot trust his rational nature. He wilfully puts a fetter upon his intelligence, and in bondage to what he calls faith delivers himself up to an external authority to save him from the obligation of judging the truth as it makes its appeal to the consciousness of a thinking being. No man has a right to give up his soul to any external society or institution, however ancient or imposing be its name. In the last resort it must be reason and not authority which commends the truth to a man. Truth cannot be imposed from without ; it must grow up within the soul, becoming a part of the man himself and winning its homage by its own inherent reasonableness.[1]

But from this Newman shrank. Driven from one position to another by a feeling of insufficiency at each stage in his quest he became weary and uncertain of himself ; and at last relinquishing all the rights and responsibilities of a thinking being he hid himself in the " secure haven of Romanish infallibility."

In the wonderful poem, *The Dream of Gerontius*, he makes the Angel say to the passing soul : " It is the very energy of thought that keeps Thee from thy God." And though he knew it not, it was the very energy of his own thought that kept Newman so long from the Church, in which, by the suppression of thought, he at last found ignoble refuge. By nature a thinker himself, he came to regard the exercise of reason, as applied to the things of God, as almost one of the deadly sins, or, at least, a pernicious growth in man

[1] Cf. Storr, *op. cit.* p. 266.

which ought to be nipped in the bud. His distrust of reason was based upon a false philosophy of knowledge, the weakness of which was clearly brought to light, subsequent to the time of Newman, by Mansel's attempt in his *Limits of Religious Knowledge* to show that because of the imbecility of our intelligence" the Infinite is an inconceivable idea. The logical result of this view was reached in the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, who drew the inference that "the term 'God' is but a name for that ultimate reality the nature of which is by us unknowable and indefinable."[1]

The philosophy of Agnosticism, the denial of any direct knowledge of God, lies at the root of Newman's doctrine of the Church and vitiates the entire Tractarian theology. Newman virtually discredits man's ability to know God, and sets up an impassable barrier between the human consciousness and ultimate reality. But man must have some source of authority and guidance. Where shall he find it? "In the Church"—says Newman. The Church has been divinely appointed to guarantee what reason can neither originate nor understand. But it may be asked, if the mind cannot understand God even when revealed to it, how can He be revealed to the Church? For what is the Church but a society, which in every age is composed of men and women of like powers and passions with ourselves. To make the Church the sponsor of God does not obviate the fundamental difficulty, that man, as a being who is incapable of transcending his own limited consciousness, cannot be the recipient of the certainty of God's revelation, since he cannot form any idea of what this God is of whom the Church speaks. The illogical character of Newman's position is revealed,

[1] Spencer's *Principles*. Cf. Professor Watson's *Philosophical Basis of Religion*, p. 21.

as it seems to us, in a striking passage of the *Apologia* in which the author seeks to vindicate the need of an infallible human authority and to prove that the Church fulfils this function.

"Supposing then, it be the will of the Creator to interfere in human affairs and to make provisions for retaining in the world a knowledge of Himself, so definite and distinct as to be proof against the energy of human scepticism . . . . in such a case, I am far from saying that there was no other way, but there is nothing to surprise the mind, if He should think fit to introduce a power into the world invested with the prerogative of infallibility on religious matters. Such a provision would be a direct, immediate, certain and prompt means of withstanding the difficulty.; it would be an instrument suited to the need; and when I find that this is the very claim of the Catholic Church, not only do I feel no difficulty in admitting the idea, but there is a fitness in it which recommends it to my mind. And thus I am brought to speak of the Church's infallibility as a provision, adapted by the mercy of the Creator, to preserve religion in the world, and *to restrain that freedom of thought,* which, of course, in itself, is one of the greatest of natural gifts, and to *rescue it from its own suicidal excesses.*" [1]

This passage seems to involve the utter inability of the reason of man to know God's truth directly; and so disposed "to devour its own offspring," as to need the bit and bridle of an infallible human authority "to rescue it from its own suicidal excesses." Passing over the obvious contradiction involved in putting man above God, or at least putting God's providence revealed in a human institution above God's Spirit, as revealed in the conscience and reason of

[1] *Apologia*, p. 382.

man,[1] it is to be observed that Newman practically reduces the Church here to a kind of moral police-force, brought into existence by God "to restrain" externally and mechanically, "freedom of thought." The God of Newman's Faith is after all an unknown Being, whose revelation has nothing in it which can win the spontaneous response of man's higher nature, and whose will, conveyed through an external intermediatory, must coerce minds which are powerless to appreciate what is offered to them because there is no affinity between God and man. But how, it seems pertinent to ask, could an infallible authority, as here described, ensure any proper and intelligent acceptance of truth that man had no real power to apprehend? What kind of religion worth having could be "preserved in the world" by the fiat of an infallible institution which seeks to crush all that is highest and most distinctive in man, and only maintains its ascendancy by coercion and restraint?

But what, it may be further asked, is this Church to which Newman and even his Anglican followers attribute such power? Putting aside the precarious doctrine of Apostolic succession, a position to which, as Cardinal Wiseman clearly showed,[2] the Church of England can lay no claim, what is the authority on which they rest? In their search for fundamentals they appeal to the past. But they select a past which suits their own theory. They go back, not to the Church of Scripture, but to the Church after it was fully organized. It is the Patristic Church of the fourth century to which they turn in order to find a model

[1] R. H. Hutton, *Modern Guides of English Thought in Matters of Faith*, p. 82.

[2] See three articles in *Dublin Review*, 1836, quoted by Hunt, *Religious Thought in Nineteenth Century*, p. 142.

for the nineteenth century. The present with its living problems and pressing needs has no interest for them. Their object is not to construct a theology which shall meet the questions of their day, but simply to recover old formulas and effete dogmas with which to stem the tide of modern enquiry. Thus do they galvanize into a semblance of life old-world conditions, and make them a pattern for their own and succeeding ages. It is an impossible attempt. It is an arbitrary limitation of the Spirit of God, a mechanical arrestment of Divine revelation and human thought. Man refuses to be fettered by the traditions of the past or to close his mind against the challenge which each new age brings.

The inherent weakness of Tractarianism is that Christ occupies a subordinate place in their system. They hark back to the past, but they do not go to the fountain-head. They do not indeed deny the divine origin of Christianity, but the Person and mind of Jesus, in their application to the needs of modern life, count for little with them. All the recent critical research throwing light on the meaning of the Gospels, the concentration of interest upon the problem of the historical Christ, the whole development of German thought through the previous half-century, hardly touch them. The doctrine of Apostolic Succession, Baptismal Regeneration, the supreme efficacy of the sacraments, the divine import of the Church and its priesthood, bulk far more largely in their minds than the Life and Words of Him who is and ought to be the secret and spring of all that Christianity means for us. It is remarkable how little there is about Christ and His teaching in the works of the Tractarians. But it is even more notable how little the Christ of the Gospels has to say about the matters on which the Oxford School laid so much stress.

In the High Church party of to-day a curious indirect pre-eminence is being accorded to Christ. The Sacramentarian theory which Keble borrowed from the Mediæval Church has been revived, and a special importance is attached to the Sacrament of the Eucharist in which as an embodiment of the Real Presence the Church recognises an extension of the Incarnation, and feels itself to be in immediate contact with the Redeemer.[1] Thus the truth of Christianity is mediated to the believer, not through the traditions of the Church alone, but more especially by the living presence of Christ, who comes into life-giving touch with the faithful as the believing recipients of His body. But the difficulties of this theory are not less than those connected with the doctrine of the Church as the infallible organ of revelation. It makes the truth of revelation to repose upon a magical occurrence and reduces the Christ of Faith to a merely material entity, denuding the Gospel of all intelligibility and reasonableness as an appeal to the conscience and mind of man.

VI

The immediate consequence of the Tractarian movement has been the rapid and wide-spread growth of Ritualism in England. Whatever may be the perils of this phase of Church life, it has undoubtedly brought an enrichment to religious observance and helped the Church to recover much that is stately and inspiring in the order and worship of the past. It has infused into the prayers and song of the sanctuary and all the ecclesiastical forms a reverence and beauty which were

[1] Cf. Fairbairn, *Catholicism, Roman and Anglican*, chap. vii.

too often lacking in the bald Evangelical types of worship inherited from Puritan times. Perhaps, too, we are apt to overlook "the reality of a great spiritual society extending through all Christian ages, living by its own truth and life," which the Tractarian movement did much to accentuate and bring home to the hearts of Christian people at a time when the twofold spirit of sectarianism and secularism was spreading throughout the country and greatly impairing the visible testimony to God and His truth.

But though the Oxford movement remains a great and imposing phenomenon in the evolution of Christianity, and while it has revived some forgotten truths and aspects of Christian life, it is doubtful if its contribution to modern thought has been so valuable as some Anglicans assume. With the possible exception of Newman's *Development of Christian Doctrine,* it has produced no theological work of the first rank. Pusey, though a capable Hebrew scholar, was lamentably conservative in regard to the results of historical criticism. On the question of the meaning of the Church and the nature of its authority the ideas of the Tractarians generally are those of the Mediæval Scholastics. No names like those of Hooker or Jeremy Taylor appear, while in originality and breadth of view the High Church party has nothing to show comparable to the Anglican theology of the seventeenth century. The movement has touched but little the leading minds of our time. Men like Hort and Westcott, Lightfoot and Hatch, Robertson, Jowett, and Stanley owe nothing to it.[1]

"Read the lives of Pusey and Liddon," says Mrs. Humphry Ward, or further back, of Newman himself,

[1] Cf. Fairbairn, *Catholicism, Anglicanism and Romanism.* Also Storr, *op. cit.* p. 272.

men whose goodness and piety cannot be questioned ; how little do the leading ideas of that seething time of social and industrial reform appeal to them. They were more interested in the date of the Book of Daniel or the retention of the Athanasian Creed than the Education Bill of 1870." If the High Church party are alive to-day to the needs of social reform and are busy in labours for the elevation of the working classes, it is not because of the impulse they received from their Tractarian predecessors, but just "in so far as they have learned the lesson of social pity from the men whom Pusey and Liddon condemned and persecuted in the middle years of the nineteenth century."

"Newman, Pusey, Liddon—all great schoolmen . . . . History has surely undermined the work of all three ; sparing only that element in the work of one of them—Newman—which is the preserving salt of all literature—the magic of Personality "[1]

[1] *A Writer's Recollections*, pp. 134-5.

CHAPTER XV

LIBERAL TENDENCIES IN BRITISH THOUGHT

ALMOST contemporaneous with the Tractarian movement described in last chapter, there was another which, though not attaining its zenith of power so rapidly, has been more lasting in its effects upon modern thought. It is difficult to give to this tendency a name which would be inclusive of its diverse features. It has been sometimes called the Broad Church School, in contradistinction to the High Church Party. It might be termed the Intellectual school, inasmuch as its adherents laid emphasis on the mental rather than the emotional element in religion. But even this title is not sufficiently distinctive nor wholly descriptive of its aims. For our purpose it will be more appropriate to name the movement which is to engage our attention in this chapter, The Liberal Tendency in Theology, in contrast to the more conservative attitude of the Evangelical party on the one side, and the Tractarian party on the other.

I

As has been already remarked, the revival of theological interest in Britain dates from Coleridge, and

owes its incentive chiefly to his *Aids to Reflection*, published in 1825. In a previous chapter we have spoken of the influence of the poetry of Coleridge upon modern thought. Here we can only refer briefly to his theological writings. We shall not pause to examine his general philosophical ideas nor discuss the charges of Pantheism and other heterodoxies which have been brought against his teaching. Coleridge was not systematic in his modes of reflection, nor was he always careful to avoid inconsistencies of thought. But of his essential Christianity there can be no question. He was a child of Romanticism, an enthusiastic worshipper of nature and freedom. He had studied in Germany in his youth ; and the idealism of Lessing and Schelling had moulded his religious ideas. With Herder and Schleiermacher, by whose works he was much impressed, he held that Christianity was not so much a theory as a life, not a mere speculation, but an experience. While he sympathized with the supernaturalism of the Evangelicals, he differed from them in conceiving religion, not as something strange and foreign, given from without, but as something native in man to which divine revelation makes appeal. The truth of Christianity can therefore never contradict man's higher reason when properly understood. Coleridge was the first in our country to make Kant known, and he lays much stress upon the Kantian distinction between the logical understanding or the "faculty of judging according to sense" and "reason"—the "faculty of universal and necessary truths." But he goes beyond Kant's *Practical Reason*, ascribing to it, after the manner of Schelling, an intellectual intuition of spiritual objects. Coleridge applies his philosophical reflections to the Christian doctrines of Sin, Redemption and Inspiration. He seeks to rationalize the

dogmas of tradition by separating the moral kernel from the scholastic husk in which the truth is encased. Sin, for example, is conceived, not as inherited but as self-originated. It is original only in the sense of being an act of the individual will. "In respect of original sin," he says in agreement with Kant, "every man is the adequate representation of *all* men"; and, "in this sense only is Adam a type of the race." Likewise, in treating of Redemption, he sees the cause of it, not so much in the Death of Christ as "in the Incarnation of the creative Word in the Person of Christ." Again, in his Essay entitled *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit,* published after his death in 1840, he assails the common theory of Inspiration. He maintains that the Biblical writers themselves laid no claim to verbal inerrancy; and he exposes the injury to faith which arises from an antiquated veneration for the mere words of Scripture. "It is the spirit of the Bible, and not the detached words and sentences, that is infallible and absolute."

One other contribution Coleridge made to the thought of his time. He did much to revive the historic idea of the Church as a spiritual commonwealth.[1] He gave it a broader and more rational basis, dwelling upon its corporate unity rather than its individual character, as represented by the Evangelical party. To Coleridge the Church embraced all human interests. It ought to be not only the home of piety, but the focus of art and culture as well, the centre of every intellectual and spiritual activity.

Thus, in three directions, as has been pointed out by Principal Tulloch, Coleridge gave a definite impulse to the religious thought of the century. He laid anew the foundations of spiritual philosophy; he revivified

[1] Cf. his work on *The Constitution of Church and State,* published 1830.

an interest in Biblical study by directing attention to the work that had been done on the Continent in the department of criticism ; and he set before his countrymen a larger conception of the Church as the representative and channel of Christian revelation. These ideas, if not entirely original, were novel at the time in Britain, and they were greatly provocative of thought, especially among the younger generation.

II

The successors of Coleridge—Hare, Whately, Arnold and Maurice—sought, in opposition to the Tractarians, to justify religion by an appeal to the spiritual instincts of humanity, and to give to reason a much wider significance than Newman and his sympathizers were disposed to do. Newman himself was brought up in the atmosphere of Oxford, the early home of liberalism, and for a time was even a member, along with Whately and Arnold, of the ' Noetic ' school. But he became more and more distrustful of reason and gradually came to regard it as merely the instrument of logic, hopelessly inadequate as a guide to higher truth. He tells us how he watched the incoming tide of liberalism with much disquietude, and how he came eventually to dissociate himself from its leaders. In 1825, the same year in which the *Aids to Reflection* was published, Whately's Essay, *On some Peculiarities of the Christian Religion,* appeared ; and three years later, his volume upon *Some Difficulties in the Writings of St. Paul.* Whately was fifteen years younger than Coleridge. The two men differed greatly in mental constitution and characteristics. Both were indeed profound thinkers, interested deeply in metaphysical

questions; but while Coleridge was a poet and a mystic, Whately was gifted with a mathematical mind, and was severely logical in his mode of thinking. While Coleridge "brought to the interpretation of Christianity the light of a fresh spiritual philosophy, and sought some synthesis of thought by which religion in its highest form should be seen not only to be in harmony with human nature, but to be its only perfect flower and development, Whately, taking the prevailing philosophy as he found it, brought the daylight of ordinary reason to play upon the accumulated dogmas of traditional religion."[1] He was the scorner of prejudice and common-place, the untiring contender for honesty and plainness of statement. He annotated Paley's works, and in his own *Christian Evidences* he displays not a little of Paley's style of apologetic. A keen logician and something of an iconoclast, many an old fallacy and time-honoured belief met with short shrift at his hands. He opposed Calvinistic election; he denied Apostolic succession, verbal inspiration, unconditional Immortality and the perpetual obligation of the Fourth Commandment.

Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby, born in 1795, was eight years younger than Whately, and was his pupil and closest friend. He was a broad-minded and robust Christian, but a man of intense spirituality. All his life was interpenetrated and coloured by religion. Dean Stanley, his most attached pupil and biographer, says that his most striking characteristic was "a deep consciousness of the invisible Presence."[2] It was his life even more than his writings or utterances that was the secret of the remarkable influence exerted by him on contemporary English thought. Arnold was really the pioneer of religious liberalism. His early death

[1] See Tulloch, *op. cit.* p. 48. [2] Stanley's *Life of Dr. Arnold*, chap. i.

precluded him from developing his views in any great theological work. His literary labours were devoted chiefly to classical scholarship and history. There was indeed nothing new in his conception of Christianity. But it may be claimed for him that he was the first to demand that the Bible should be examined and read like any other book, honestly and impartially; and that only as it is freed from all dogmatic prejudice will it become a moral force in the moulding of life. Reference has already been made to his contribution to Biblical Criticism, and we cannot enlarge upon his general views in regard to ecclesiastical reform.[1] He was on the side of freedom and progress; and many of the changes advocated by him, though bitterly opposed at the time by churchmen and dissenters alike, have since been adopted. Nowhere are the breadth and independence of Arnold's mind so clearly shown as in his attitude to the famous, though now partially forgotten, 'Hampden controversy.' The angry denunciations which the Bampton Lectures of that divine called forth are significant of the narrowness, party passion and bigotry of the age.[2] The aim of Hampden's discourses was to show how the traditional theology which prevailed at the beginning of the nineteenth century had grown up under the influence of Scholasticism, and was therefore not to be regarded as a divine product, nor in any way derivative from divine revelation; and instead of being a blessing to the Church it had been "the principal obstacle to its union and peace." This view created great excitement, and called forth the condemnation of Newman, Pusey, Samuel Wilberforce, and, in a partial degree, of Mr.

[1] See his *Principles of Church Reform.*

[2] An example may be found in Mosley's *Reminiscences*, which for bitterness and rancour is surely unrivalled.

Gladstone. Arnold was among the few who defended the character of Hampden from what he calls "the deliberate falsehoods" that were hurled against him.[1] The crux of the offence was that Hampden had advocated the admission of non-conformists to the university and was in favour generally of removing all theological tests. "Hampden," writes Arnold to an old pupil,[2] "is a good man and an able one, a lover of truth and fairness. . . . His *Bampton Lectures* are a great work, entirely true in their main points, and, I think, most useful. But it is entirely like the cry of Oxford a hundred and twenty years ago, when the Lower House of Convocation condemned Burnet's *Exposition of the Articles*. So always in the course of human things the tail labours to sting the head."

The great book on Christian Politics which Arnold hoped to achieve was never written. His letters show how constantly he looked forward to this work. But it is only a wider survey of his general views which reveals how completely this was the centre around which were gathered, not only all his writings, but all his thoughts and actions upon social subjects; and which, as his biographer remarks, "gave him a distinct position among English divines, not only of the present, but of almost all preceding generations." Other immediate disciples of Coleridge must be passed over without comment; such as Julius and Augustus Hare, joint authors of a book famous in its day, *Guesses at Truth*; and John Sterling, whose name has been preserved in Carlyle's priceless memoir—men who exemplified by their lives even more than by their writings, the happy blending of piety and freedom.

[1] See Art. by Arnold in *Edinburgh Review* on "The Oxford Malignants."

[2] *Life and Correspondence*, letter 126.

III

Greater than any of these was Frederick Denison Maurice, the friend of Arnold, and the pupil, and later the brother-in-law, of Julius Hare. With Maurice begins a new, and in some respects, a more pronounced phase of liberal thought.[1] He was one of the most profound theologians of the century. Combining in a remarkable degree speculative talent with vivid practical interest, the breadth and subtlety of his mind have left their mark on every branch of modern culture. He was the son of a Unitarian minister, but he soon became dissatisfied with the inadequacy of his father's creed, and arrived at a belief in the Trinity based on the reality of the Incarnation which, from his Oxford days, became the distinctive tenet of his faith. He was actually rebaptised and entered the communion of the Church of England. For a short time he came under the spell of Newman, but repelled by Pusey's 'Tracts' on Baptism, he eventually separated himself from the Tractarians. In 1838 he published his first important book, *The Kingdom of Christ*. This was followed some years later by his *Doctrine of Sacrifice*—a development of the same line of thought. In these works there is disclosed what may be taken as the basal principle of Maurice's theology, the idea that Christ is in every man; and that consequently every man is in Christ, and is in reality the child of God. Sin consists in refusing to acknowledge this fact; and salvation is ours as we realize the glory of the truth of our sonship. In his famous *Theological Essays* he discards the traditional idea of Satisfaction by

[1] See *Life of Maurice*, by his son.

penal suffering, and maintains that Christ reconciles man to God by presenting "the image of Divine holiness and love." Christ's whole life was "a reflection of the mind of God." He repudiates the idea of an "artificial substitution."[1] "Christ is the sinless root of humanity."—"The root of righteousness in each man." These ideas startled the Church, and certainly did not commend themselves to the more conservative churchmen of the time. But, strange to say, it was more particularly the last essay on *Eternal Life and Eternal Death* which gave rise to the keenest controversy and deprived him of his professorship in King's College. He was branded as a "Broad Churchman," and charged with heresy. It was probably the vagueness and obscurity both of language and thought, more than what he actually affirmed, that roused suspicion. He contended that the essay was misunderstood. He denied that he was a universalist. Whether punishment hereafter will be without end or not, he would not either affirm or deny. The word 'eternal' has, he tells us, no reference to time. It is a spiritual idea. It applies solely to God and to the supra-temporal world. Heaven and Hell signify spiritual states in communion with, or separation from, God, and have no implication of future duration. To know God and find our life in Him, to live above the world of sense in spiritual fellowship with Christ—that is eternal life—a life which may be enjoyed even here and now.

It would be difficult to classify Maurice. He repudiated the name of High Churchman. He was not a party leader. His son tells us that he thought parties in the Church—sectarianism of any kind—an evil so grave that nothing could excuse the organisation of a new

[1] Candlish's criticism is directed to this point. See *Examination of Mr. Maurice's Essay.*

party. He occupied, therefore, and was content to occupy, an isolated position. He was singularly independent in his judgments, and could not agree on many points with those even whose opinions were often confounded with his own. Yet, in spite of his divergence from his friends and natural allies none was so ready to champion the cause of each in time of unpopularity and persecution. He stood by both Colenso and Robertson against the attacks which were made upon them. It was not always easy for his friends to understand his position. He himself acknowledged that he was liable to be "disclaimed as a muddy mystic." He has been described as "that interesting and important type of Liberal Churchmanship which clings with loyalty to disputed doctrines and sees new depths of meaning in the old formularies."[1] Around the Person of Christ his whole theology revolved. The Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the value of personality, the sanctity of the family, the significance of the Church and nation—all had their meaning only as they were interpreted in the light of God's revelation in Christ. He strongly controverted Mansel's position regarding the knowledge of God, based on Sir William Hamilton's doctrine of the unknowableness of the Absolute. Revelation was represented by Mansel as merely regulative, to be received on external authority, since we have no faculty to judge of its content. This form of Agnosticism was entirely opposed to all that Maurice taught. Revelation was for him, on the contrary, a direct manifestation of the Infinite God—God speaking immediately to the spirit of man. If we cannot know God, if we cannot rise above our own conceptions, then we can know

[1] H. G. Woods in a volume of essays on *Anglican Liberalism*, p. 219.

nothing. It is because there is that in man to which Christ, who manifests God, can appeal that the divine nature is a reality to us, the source and inspiration of our life.

There was indeed a deep vein of mysticism in Maurice. That he was greatly indebted to the teaching of Coleridge is patent to the student of his writings, even though he had not expressly acknowledged his "deep and solemn obligations" to the *Aids to Reflection*. But along with the speculative side of his nature there was also a strong practical element, which found expression in his labours for the working classes. He was the mainspring of the movement, then entirely novel, known as 'Christian Socialism'; and was the first principal of the Working Men's College. In his volume on *The Conscience and Social Morality*, he contends for the sanctity and worth of the individual, and denounces all political economy based on selfishness and not on the true conception of personality as manifested and measured by the Cross of Christ.

"He was the most beautiful soul I ever met," says Kingsley of him; and the spirit which animated his life has borne much fruit since his death. If he founded no school he was one of the earliest progressive teachers of the century. At a time of dead traditionalism, on the one hand, and a growing secularism on the other, he bore witness to the reality of the divine and upheld a creed of high Christian idealism, giving by his personality and writings a powerful incentive to the new spiritual interpretation of life which found in Kingsley, Frederick Robertson and Tennyson its chief supporters.

Charles Kingsley was a man of versatile talent—novelist, poet, preacher, scientist, historian, reformer and sportsman. On the theological side he acknow-

ledged Maurice as his master ; " owing more," as he tells us, " to Maurice's *Kingdom of God* than to any other book." Settled as a young clergyman in the beautiful parish of Eversley, he found it in a sad state of neglect. He turned to Maurice for advice and help. He confesses that he did not understand his friend's theory of the Trinity, but he learned from him the meaning of the Fatherhood of God, and the reality of religion in its application to life. Kingsley's name has been associated with what has been called " Muscular Christianity." He was the Chartist parson of 1848, the " Parson Lot," who sympathized so passionately with working men. Certainly the ardour of his nature and the diversity of his interests enabled him to enter into all kinds of experience and proclaim in romance, poem and sermon, as well as physical sport, the power of Christianity to hallow and transfigure the whole life of man. He was advanced and outspoken in his beliefs. He was not a profound theologian, but he was an eloquent preacher, and his sermons at Westminster Abbey, at the close of his life, attracted many who were more or less outside the influence of the Church. " He was," said Stanley, " a layman in the guise or disguise of a clergyman." His religious influence was in the main a personal one ; and though his vehemence of spirit led him into exaggerations and mistakes, as in the case of his controversy with Newman, he was among the conspicuous teachers of his age. It is chiefly as a social reformer that he is now remembered. Many of his novels and pamphlets were written to combat the abuses of society and to advocate a life of greater joy and freedom for the toiling masses. *Alton Locke* is a forcible denunciation of the sweated industries of large cities ; while *Yeast* is a story of country life, uttering the indignation

which burned in his heart as he thought of the degradation and ignorance of the agricultural classes, engendered by their masters' neglect. Undoubtedly he had a social message for his age. Kingsley is still an inspiration to the reformer of to-day, though perhaps his socialism would now be regarded as of a very mild and antiquated order. Yet he insisted upon that element which is so largely forgotten by present-day agitators. No one has done more by his writings to affirm that religion is not a dogma but a life, not a cloistered profession, but a living faith, to be worked out by conflict in every sphere of individual and social activity.

Along with Kingsley may be placed Frederick W. Robertson, though he really stands alone. "Sever yourself from all sectarianism; pledge yourself to no school; be a slave to no maxims; stand forth unfettered and alone, servant only to the truth." These words, which occur in a lecture on poetry to the working classes, might be taken as the motto of his own life. Originality, independence and sincerity were the features of the man and his work. He drew much of his inspiration from Wordsworth, and there are indications that he had deeply read Coleridge. He was an enthusiast for German literature, and the works of Lessing and Herder, Goethe and Fichte greatly impressed him. Beyond his sermons and a few lectures, and above all, his letters, into which he put his best, all posthumously published, he has left no writings. He died at the early age of thirty-seven, a martyr to a painful brain trouble, and the object of a cruel persecution which preyed upon his deeply sensitive nature. Yet his personality and teaching have powerfully impressed the world of Christian thought. Probably no life more completely reflects the spiritual

conflicts and aspirations of the second half of the nineteenth century. During his brief ministry at Brighton he faced with singular courage the great religious and social problems which were beginning to agitate the common mind; and his intellectual grasp of the principles, upon which alone a solution could be attempted, gives him a unique place among the liberal teachers of the century. He was of Scottish parentage, and spent his school life in Edinburgh. His father was a soldier, and as a boy he passionately looked forward to the same profession. The soldierly traits—loyalty to duty, intensity of spirit, self-effacing heroism—are reflected in his history. It was inevitable that much of his life should be spent in conflict. For though he was no party man, he did not shirk controversy nor refuse to speak out strongly on the side which he was convinced was right and in need of his championship. His 'life,' written by Stopford Brooke, a kindred spirit, is one of the great biographies of any language. The letters and reflections bearing upon nature, history, God, and the inmost emotions and experiences of the human soul, reminding the reader not a little of Amiel's *Journal Intime,* which enrich the volumes, are among our most treasured legacies. It is the life-story of the spiritual travail of one whose mastering passion it was to reproduce in his own person the beauty of Christ, and to use his experience in others' service. From the beginning he felt no real affinity with the High Church party. Nor did the Evangelicals, among whom he was brought up, attract him. The one thing he despised was hypocrisy, and the aim of his teaching was to break through the crust of formalism and get to the soul of truth. Stern in the denunciation of moral evil, he was tolerant of intellectual error, trying always

to unveil the truth which the mind was groping after but had missed. By the strength of his sincerity and a somewhat rare combination of rational and emotional sympathy, he was enabled to attract many to more positive belief, for whom the ordinary services of the Church had little meaning. To him Christ was central, and the burden of his ministry was to bring the religion of Jesus to bear upon common life. He himself has summed up the cardinal principles upon which he sought to base his teaching: 1. The establishment of positive truth instead of the negative destruction of error. 2. That truth is made up of two opposite propositions, and not found in a *Via Media* between the two. 3. That spiritual truth is discerned by the spirit, instead of intellectually, in propositions; and, therefore, truth should be taught suggestively, not dogmatically. 4. That belief in the human side of Christ's character must be antecedent to belief in His divine origin. 5. That Christianity, as its teachers should, works from the inward to the outward, and not vice versa. 6. The soul of goodness in things evil.[1] On the first of these principles the whole of his controversial teaching was founded. And the second, which is in harmony with the historical method which the Hegelian school were the first to apply to religious truth, finds notable illustration in Robertson's sermons on 'The Glory of the Virgin Mother,' 'Baptism and Absolution,' and 'The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.'

Robertson was not afraid to deal with the profoundest problems of theology in the pulpit. His preaching was not merely ethical. But he sought to show that every great truth has a directly practical bearing, and has no worth for us until it is translated into life. Two

[1] See *Life*, vol. ii. p. 153.

doctrines especially he did much to elucidate—the nature of Christ's Personality, and the mystery of His sacrifice. Never was teacher more emphatic in presenting the real Manhood of Jesus, while not losing sight of His Divinity. We are also indebted to him for a genuine attempt to grasp and render intelligible the Atonement. Christ in a real sense died for us, laying down His life for His sheep. He exposed Himself to their danger, and in so doing made His life one with theirs. He did not, however, bear literally the wrath of God. That in the nature of the case was impossible. He could not actually be regarded by God as a sinner deserving of punishment. But as man's brother he came into collision with the world's evil, and had to bear its penalty. By becoming man as man he had to suffer. In this sense alone, He bore the penalty of sin, the sin of others.[1]

IV

The deeper note which Coleridge struck, and which Maurice, Robertson and others sounded, found a response also in two Scottish writers—Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, and John McLeod Campbell.

Erskine was trained for the Bar, but had early retired from the legal profession and devoted himself to theological study. In 1820 he published *The Internal Evidence for the Truth of Revealed Religion*, in which he maintained that the chief proof of Christianity lay in its adaptability to man's needs. He was opposed to the rigid Calvinism of the Scottish Church, and advocated universal restoration as grounded on the Fatherhood of God, whose love for all mankind must

[1] Sermon on *Caiaphas*, vol. i.

ultimately prevail. His writings exercised a considerable influence upon Maurice who, in dedicating his volume, *The Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament*, to Erskine, claims him as "the spiritual progenitor of those who bear witness for a God of Righteousness, not only against idolatry, but against the notion of a mere Sovereign-Baal which underlies all idolatry, tyranny and immorality, and testify to the completeness and universality of the Sacrifice of Christ offered and accepted once for all."[1] Erskine was one of the earliest in Britain to assert the Immanence of God and declare the correlative truth that there is in man a spiritual faculty which enables him to respond to divine revelation. The Scottish theologian, though not indebted to Schleiermacher, shared with the German thinkers the distinction of being an apostle of the 'Christian consciousness.' In his later writings Erskine directed his attention to the essential character of Christianity as a revelation of divine love, and proclaimed the unconditional freeness of the Gospel. It was his teaching regarding Election and the Universality of the Atonement which gave rise to the Scottish school of which McLeod Campbell, A. C. Scott and Edward Irving were the chief representatives. Of this school the name which has left the deepest mark upon theology is that of Campbell. Like his friend Erskine, he came under the suspicion of the Church of Scotland, of which he was a minister, on account of his declaration of unlimited redemption. In one sense the doctrine was not a novelty in Scotland. From Knox to Chalmers the Church had never lost sight of the universal aspect of the Gospel, and it was quite customary for the clergy to urge upon all sinners the claim of divine mercy. Their preaching might be inconsistent with the tenets

[1] Maurice, *Prophets and Kings*, dedication, pp. x-xii.

of their creed, but there is no doubt that in the Scottish pulpit generally Salvation was practically offered to all. It was, therefore, the manner of expression rather than the matter that roused the resentment of the Church of their day against the teaching of Erskine and Campbell.

The story of Campbell's early ministry and deposition is an interesting but sad episode in Scottish Church history. As minister of the parish of Row, a quiet village on the shores of the Gareloch in Dumbartonshire, Campbell was distressed at the low spiritual tone and lack of religious interest of his flock. In seeking the cause he was constrained to believe that it was uncertainty of the love and goodwill of God that made his people indifferent. But, he reflected, how can it be otherwise unless a man is assured that Christ has died for all, and therefore for him? When it was put thus bluntly the strict Calvinist could not tolerate such teaching. He was charged, unjustly, with preaching that all men were already saved whether they knew it or not, and irrespective of the life they lived. The arraignment ended in Campbell's deposition by the judgment of the General Assembly of 1831. In the same year, Scott, afterwards Principal of Owen's College, Manchester, was deprived of his licence to preach; and Edward Irving, the friend of Coleridge and Carlyle, the assistant of Chalmers in Glasgow, and afterwards minister in London, a man of unusual if erratic brilliance, was cast out of the bosom of his mother church.

Ere the proceedings closed, a question of considerable importance, which has since greatly agitated the religious mind, was raised by Campbell. Even admitting that the doctrine taught went beyond the formal confession of faith, if it could be shown to be "the Truth of

God," was it not obligatory upon the Church? In other words, Is the Church not bound to acknowledge any higher light than she has hitherto recognised, if it can be clearly proved to be the teaching of the "Word of God"? Are not the Scriptures, in short, the supreme rule of faith? Campbell did not admit that his teaching contradicted the Westminster Confession; but, granting that it did so, he appealed to the authority of the Bible as alone decisive. "If you show me," he said in his defence, "that anything I have taught is inconsistent with the Word of God, I shall give it up and allow you to regard it as heresy. . . . If a confession of faith were something to stint or stop the Church's growth in light and knowledge, and to say, 'thus far and no further,' then a confession of faith would be the greatest curse that ever befell a Church. . . . In matters of doctrine no lower authority can be recognised than that of God."[1] Thus early, McLeod Campbell proclaimed himself to be the champion of progress, and made a stand for liberty to believe in the development of Christian doctrine. But he was in advance of his age; and such views as he contended for were offensive to the majority of the Church of Scotland of his day.

Campbell's treatise on the Atonement, the fruit of after years of quiet study, is one of the greatest books that has ever been written on the subject. It first appeared in 1856, and has since profoundly influenced theological thought throughout the whole world. It ranks with Schleiermacher's *Christliche Glaube*, Ritschl's *Justification and Reconciliation*, and Bushnell's *Vicarious Sacrifice*. "In speculative power," says Principal Denney, Campbell cannot be compared to Schleiermacher, nor in historical learning to Ritschl,

[1] Quoted by Tulloch, *op. cit.* p. 152.

and sometimes he writes as badly as either, but he walks in the light all the time, and everything he touches lives."[1] The characteristic of these works of the nineteenth century just named is that, unlike those of any earlier period, they found their argument upon history and experience. They closely connect the work of Christ with the life of Christ. Jesus is the Saviour, not by some special added-on gift, but by being what He is and doing what He does. These writers do not interpret Christ in the light of Salvation. They interpret Salvation in the light of Christ. Christ is like His own seamless robe, woven, all of a piece, from the top to the bottom. This is the new note, struck by these men independently, in the theology of the Atonement, and it is of incalculable value for the future treatment of this problem. Reconciliation rises out of the Personality of the Redeemer, and is to be conceived as ethical both in its inspiration and achievement. Campbell repudiates the penal nature of Christ's sufferings and bases the whole conception of atonement upon the idea of divine love. He starts with the Fatherhood of God, whose righteous love wills the salvation of His children. Christ effected reconciliation by becoming the Mediator between God and man, representing both. As God's representative He accepted God's point of view, identifying Himself with God's hatred and condemnation of sin. As man's representative He identified Himself with sinful humanity, accepting every burden that sin has laid upon man, everything *except sin* itself; and He seeks to reproduce in man His own attitude and feeling towards sin. If He could only get men to do that, to see it as He sees it, to hate and abhor it, then He has brought man to the mastery of himself; to the

[1] *Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, p. 120.

state in which he sees life as God sees it and would have him live it. From God's side, to employ the peculiar phraseology of Campbell, Christ uttered a complete condemnation of sin. From man's side, He made a perfect confession of the justice of God's wrath, which became "a perfect *Amen* in humanity to the judgment of God on the sin of man."[1] The main point to be seized is that Christ enters sympathetically into the whole state and responsibilities of His sinful brethren, making their burden His own as far as it is possible for love. Christ's response to the divine condemnation of sin "has all the elements, except the personal consequences of sin, of a perfect repentance in humanity for all the sin of man"; and "by that perfect response in Amen to the mind of God, is the wrath of God rightly met, and *that* is accorded to divine justice which is its due, and could alone satisfy it."[2] This view of vicarious repentance stands in contrast to the idea of the earlier theologians who conceive of Christ as man's literal substitute in all his relation to God. According to Campbell man by his 'amen' accepts and endorses as his own the "confession" which Christ has uttered. The language is needlessly involved and vague; but the distinctive element in the theory is, as Bushnell would put it, that vicariousness is but another name for love—a love so deep and strong as to impel Christ to make His own, short of the limit of denying His own consciousness, the experiences and feelings of man. But Christ's representation of us can avail only as His attitude to sin is reproduced in us. Man cannot be made righteous by substitution or by proxy. The Redeemer's righteousness could never be recognised as ours apart from our own capacity of partaking

[1] *Nature of the Atonement*, 3rd. Ed. p. 135. [2] *Idem*, p. 116 ff.

in it. Strictly speaking there is no such thing as 'imputed righteousness.' It must be our own, wrought in us, it is true, by Christ. "If Christ is not really changing us into His own likeness," as Denney puts it, "and enabling us to enter into the experiences in which sin involved Him, He is not reconciling us to God, and our sins are not forgiven."[1] M'Leod Campbell's theory has sometimes been expounded as if he regarded the death of Christ as non-essential to the atonement, and the whole efficacy resided in the moral and spiritual elements of His sufferings. But for him there is a real and objective power in the sacrifice of the Cross. The Life and the Work of Christ are one. His whole history is a unity. His death not only crowned and completed His life, but it is the full and necessary expression of it, so that we can truthfully say, "we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son." It is the climax and completion of His lifelong sacrifice, the perfect utterance and last word of love, without which there could be no Christ and atonement would be meaningless.

The merit of Campbell's theory is that the emphasis is placed upon the whole personality of Jesus, and not upon the incident of His Passion and death alone. The ethical character of all He does and suffers in relation to sin, and the personal quality of the response made by His identification with us and ours with Him, are invested with a new setting and value. Categories of quantity and equivalence, which occupy such an important place in Mediæval and Calvinistic theology, are quietly set aside as wholly inapplicable to the work of Christ; and questions, once keenly debated, as to the extent and limits of the Atonement are seen to be irrelevant.

[1] Denney, *op. cit.* p. 119.

Two minor objections have been taken to the theory in recent times, which, however, relate to the terminology rather than the substance of Campbell's interpretation. It is said (1) that Christ's relation to God in regard to sin cannot rightly be described as a confession of repentance; and (2) that the theory fails to bring out the complete identification of the Redeemer with humanity.[1] But granting the unfortunate use of the word 'repentance' in this connection—a word which cannot be literally applied to the Saviour—probably no mind has more clearly penetrated the mystery of Christ's twofold relation to God and man, or done fuller justice to the Biblical account of Christ's complete appreciation of, and intimate sympathy with, man in the hour of his deepest need and anguish, than the Scottish divine.

Probably McLeod Campbell has done more than any other to emancipate his countrymen from the harsher elements of Calvinism. One would have liked, if space had permitted, to dwell upon some of the writers who, in the latter half of last century have won for the northern part of Britain a distinctive place in theological thought. We can, however, do no more than name such men as Chalmers and Candlish, Norman MacLeod and Bishop Ewing, Flint and Fairbairn, John Caird and Tulloch, A. B. Bruce, Cairns, Orr and Denney, among many others, who have contributed to the enrichment of religious thought in recent times.

V

Before concluding this chapter we must return to England and describe in a few sentences the

[1] See Moberly's *Atonement and Personality*, pp. 402-410.

currents of thought which mark the close of the century.

In the year 1860 there appeared a volume, entitled *Essays and Reviews*, which constitutes an epoch in theological tendency. Silently, but gradually, during the earlier decades there had been growing a feeling in Britain that the advance of Biblical Criticism and the recent discoveries of Science demanded a revision of the theological position. The publication of this book, the work of seven scholars who had little in common save their desire to handle freely some of the more important problems of religion, brought this tendency to a head. The volume was at once a manifesto and a challenge. It contains little that is new or even startling as judged by our present-day standards. The *Essays* are not exceptionally brilliant, and it is difficult to account for the excitement they awakened. The writers were perhaps needlessly aggressive, and it was no doubt the general tone of negation pervading the papers that caused resentment. The first essay was by Frederick Temple, then headmaster of Rugby, and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, whose paper on *The Education of the Human Race* followed the line of Lessing's famous work on the same subject. Baden Powell wrote on the *Evidences of Christianity*, laying legitimate stress upon "the internal rather than the external" proofs. Rowland William's paper on *Bunsen's Biblical Researches* created special antipathy. The essay on *The National Church*, by Wilson, was perhaps the principal contribution to the volume. He built upon Coleridge, but with a wider outlook on history.

The High Church party resented the contention that the Church was only the instrument of carrying out the will of God as manifested in the Moral Law.

The best known names were those of Jowett and Mark Pattison; the former taking for his subject, *The interpretation of Scripture,* and the latter, *Tendencies of Religious Thought in England from* 1688 *to* 1750—both clever essays, but not remarkable. Frederick Harrison wrote an article in the *Westminster Review,* in which, referring to the volume, he made merry over the suicide of Christianity. Two of the writers were cited before the Ecclesiastical Courts, but, on the defence of Sir James Stephen, were acquitted. The *Essays* called forth at least two volumes in reply, both of which were extremely weak. The clock could not be put back. The controversy ended in the triumph of the Broad Church party. It is somewhat remarkable that Thirlwall, one of the earliest pioneers of liberal theology, was among those who attacked the *Essays.* On the other hand, Lightfoot, Westcott, Vaughan and Stanley refused to lend their names to the censure. Stanley had declined to contribute to the volume. He regretted deeply the error of judgment which had been committed by the essayists, but he would not endorse the indiscriminate condemnation which branded them as infidels and atheists. And when men like Jowett and Temple were particularly singled out for attack, he rushed into the fray with chivalrous disregard for personal consequences and wrote a scathing article, not indeed defending the book, but denouncing in fiery terms the dishonesty of the men who had taken the lead in condemning opinions as infidel which many of them elsewhere had expressed. His sense of justice was sorely hurt. "The cause of liberty," he affirmed, "is on its trial, pleading for its very life." [1]

Temple and Stanley quickly recovered from the opprobrium cast upon them from their connection

[1] See *Life of Stanley,* by R. E. Prothero, chap. xvi.

with the *Essays*, and came into their own. But Jowett and Pattison suffered keenly, and were long treated with coldness and suspicion by the High Churchmen of Oxford. While professor of Greek, Jowett's salary was actually withheld from him for years on theological grounds, and only at last reluctantly wrung from the governing body, of which Pusey and Liddon were members; and both he and Mark Pattison were systematically excluded from the university pulpit.[1]

Both these men were notable figures in the religious history of the period, and along with Stanley became the recognised leaders of the Liberal movement. Mark Pattison had a chequered and changing spiritual career. In his frank *Memoirs* he has traced the process of his development. For ten years he was under the spell of Newman. But from 1845 he became more independent in his philosophical outlook; and, after studying for a time in Germany, he passed "to that highest development where all religions appear in their historical light." One result of the storm which raged over the *Essays*, was that he became somewhat disillusioned and, perhaps a little embittered; he deliberately ceased to write on theological subjects and took to general literature. The cynicism, which he did not conceal, repelled many; but, on the other hand, his brilliant intellect and wide range of knowledge, as well as a certain indefinable grace of manner, impressed everyone. His attitude towards life was critical rather than constructive. His special contribution to Anglican Liberalism was, says Mr. Woods,[2] "the ideal of learning which he held before the Church"; and in contending for a more thorough scientific study of religion on the part of the clergy he did a work for

[1] See Mrs. Humphry Ward's *A Writer's Recollections*, p. 132.

[2] Contribution to volume on *Anglican Liberalism*, p. 221.

the Church of England which was greatly needed and which has begun to bear fruit.

Jowett, though he had many elements of character and conviction in common with Pattison, stands out in marked contrast to him. His religion was more human and more positive, and his influence was wider. He had greater geniality of manner and, though a stately personage, was more approachable. The sarcasm, and even cynicism, which he shared with Pattison, were tempered in his later years with deeper spiritual feeling. He was no pessimist. He strongly loved the Church of England, and saw in her growing breadth and liberality the best hope of the country's future. He was gifted with unusual sagacity, and took infinite pains in the guidance of the young minds who came to him with their difficulties. He was a brilliant conversationalist, delighting in aphorisms and pithy sayings, many of which are still treasured by Balliol men. By some of his day he was regarded as an opportunist ; but though he had his own firm convictions and could plead for them strongly, he knew the value of self-restraint and even timely concession. A gifted scholar and profound thinker, his aspirations exceeded his realizations. The life of Christ which he hoped to write remained unfulfilled. And beyond his essays and sermons, his priceless volume on the Pauline Epistles, which inaugurated, in England at least, a more humanistic and spiritual method of interpreting the New Testament ; and, above all, his translation and exposition of the *Dialogues of Plato* —a truly monumental work and a mine of suggestiveness—he has left but little of permanent value. Yet, as the Master of Balliol he is devoutly remembered, and the influence of his remarkable personality and sagacious judgment, still far from spent, has

permeated, in a degree rarely paralleled, Oxford Society, and still lives in the higher intellectual and spiritual life of those who are guiding the thought and affairs of our country.[1]

The controversy which was raised by the *Essays and Reviews* was not without its influence. It concentrated attention upon at least three important questions which the writers had suggested, but did not decide—the questions of Inspiration, Eternal Punishment, and the Relation of Christianity to the Heathen World, and especially to other religions. These subjects have since been discussed by men of different denominations and views. Some of the most notable contributions have been made by Non-conformist writers. Canon, afterwards Dean, Farrar, made 'Retribution' the subject of a series of sermons preached in Westminster Abbey in the year 1877, and afterwards published under the title, *Eternal Hope*. While Farrar only suggested an intermediate state of probation in which sinners would have an opportunity of repentance, Samuel Cox and Baldwin Brown proclaimed universal restoration, not merely as a hope but as an assurance. Edward White, in his once famous book, *Life in Christ*, vehemently advocated "Conditional Immortality," a view which was also accepted by Dale. To-day the claim is made by Congregationalists for liberty and openness of mind on this subject. Dr. Garvie, and with him are in agreement Dr. Beet and Dr. Peake, pleads only for continuity between this life and the next, but deprecates the preaching of the old-fashioned view of perpetual torment.

In 1885, a symposium on Inspiration was held, in

[1] See *Life and Letters*, by Evelyn Abbott and Lewis Campbell, published in 1897.

which clergymen of all persuasions took part. But while every conceivable aspect of the subject came under review, no definite finding was expressed beyond the general agreement that the Bible is a record of Divine revelation, but that verbal inspiration cannot be defended.

Finally, the question of the relation of Christianity to other religions has received special emphasis from the growing study of comparative religion and from the practical experience of missionaries in contact with other forms of faith. The old way was to regard all religions, other than Christian, as entirely false, deceptive and corrupting. Here, as in other matters, Baldwin Brown anticipated the larger view and declared that, for himself, he regarded the depreciation of the truth of Heathen religions as utterly un-Christian. Some years later, Mr. Compton Rickett, chairman of the Congregational Union, declared that "we cannot refuse to the sacred Scriptures of other religions clear echoes of the voice of God." And Professor J. H. Moulton, one of the foremost students of comparative religion, said that he had learned from history "that the Christian Revelation of God had affinities with the deepest and most universal instincts of men." The recognition of this truth is now a commonplace of all students of religion, and no one has given it more eloquent support and exposition than the late Principal Fairbairn.

It is somewhat strange that among the *Essays* of 1860, though the volume professedly deals with the most important matters of the Christian Faith, there is no paper on the Person of Christ. Five years later a book, anonymously appeared entitled *Ecce Homo*, which created an extraordinary excitement in religious circles. It dwelt with fine persuasiveness and much

literary skill upon the human traits of Jesus—His insight, humanity and sympathy. It turned out to be the work of J. R. Seeley, Professor of History in Cambridge.[1] *Ecce Homo* stirred an interest in the 'historical Jesus,' and there appeared a series of popular 'lives' of Christ, of which those by Farrar and Geikie were the most picturesque. But the spirit of the times craved something more basal and inward. Great questions were in the air, and great issues were at stake. Science was becoming acutely aggressive, and the Christian Faith was on its trial. On the eve of the final decade a new volume of Essays came forth with the suggestive title—*Lux Mundi*. The writers were exclusively of the High Church party. But they had an open vision for the larger movements of the age. The avowed object of the book was "to put the Catholic faith into right relations to modern intellectual and moral problems." The argument followed Broad Church lines. Gore's [2] opening essay would have produced a panic if it had been issued thirty years earlier. From the orthodox view the volume bristles with heresies. Yet it was received with comparative calm. The book was symptomatic of the trend of thought at the close of the nineteenth century, and was in a sense the Irenicon and synthesis of the High and Broad Church parties.

[1] Author also of a later volume, *Natural Religion*, published in 1882.

[2] Afterwards Bishop of Birmingham, and the author of *The Incarnation of the Son of God.*

CHAPTER XVI

RELIGIOUS TEACHERS OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

The movements which we have hitherto described have been for the most part developed within the Christian Church. Even Coleridge, who gave the initial impulse to liberal thought in Britain, was closely connected with the Church of England, and his teaching was chiefly spread among those within the pale of organized Christianity. But already in the early part of the century there were currents of thought which had their springs beyond the borders of orthodoxy and were flowing in wider fields. Thinkers were arising in England whose minds were awakening to the intellectual ferment which was agitating Europe ; but who, while dissatisfied with the traditional solutions which were in vogue in their country, could not wholly discard all interest in religious problems. These minds exercised considerable influence upon the spiritual development of the age, and without some reference to the more prominent among them no account of the shaping of religious forces would be complete.

I

The writers to whom we refer cannot be subsumed under any one title. It would be hardly correct to

speak of a negative school, though undoubtedly from the year 1840 there is evidence of a distinct protest on the part of some against the traditional forms of Christianity. Nevertheless the expression of negation and doubt which grew in force during the second half of the century scarcely attained to the dignity of a 'movement.' Without attempting an exhaustive examination of the intellectual unrest of this period, some of its more apparent causes may be enumerated.

1. The unsatisfactory state of English Philosophy of this time may be noted. The old Scottish school had become effete. The Philosophy of Common-sense, though it found in Reid a powerful champion, was unable to repel the assault of Hume's scepticism, and after the death of Dugald Stewart it practically ceased to count. Carlyle has told us that there was little spiritual food of any kind to be found in his student days in Edinburgh. Nor was the Empiricism of Locke, which lingered on in the English universities, calculated to afford much nutriment. The Utilitarianism of the Bentham and Mill type was cold and uninspiring. And the old Deism of Paley still current was not of a kind to afford a resting-place for an enquiring spirit. German thought, introduced by Coleridge and Carlyle, was beginning to reach Britain, but as yet had only touched a few minds, and the specimens of it offered to the Church in uncouth translations were more likely to foster doubt than to strengthen faith.

2. A second cause provocative of unrest, is to be found in the revolutionary claims of Biblical Criticism. The older theories of verbal inspiration were being discredited, but no satisfactory doctrine of Scripture had taken their place. And in the multitude of suggestions ranging from absolute denial of all divine

revelation to every variety of subjective interpretation, the authority of the Bible, as a source of dogmatic teaching, was being weakened. The influence of Strauss was growing in England. The *Leben Jesu,* translated by Miss Evans (George Eliot) was in great demand. Sterling's loss of faith was largely due to the teaching of the Tübingen School. Charles Hennell and George Eliot were strongly affected by German speculation. And generally, the miraculous element in the Bible, and more particularly in the Gospels, long regarded by the orthodox as the bulwark of faith, was being undermined by the new critical conclusions.

3. The Growth of the Physical Sciences, and especially the rise of the evolutionary theory, accentuated the old conflict between science and theology, to which reference has already been made. It seemed to the religious consciousness as if the cold analysis of science had robbed the world of all poetry and spiritual meaning. Interpreting existence in terms of matter, and sternly excluding the idea of freedom and spontaneity, it seemed to bring all life under the control of unbending mechanical law. The emphasis laid upon secondary causes concealed the reality of the great first cause. A new impetus was given to the materialistic explanation of all phenomena, and flushed with success, science was putting forth the theory that man himself belongs simply to a great world-movement, in relation to which his whole life, the soul, its functions and experiences, are completely determined.

This negative tendency never reached the dimensions or importance in our country which it did in France and Germany. Even those writers who attacked the Christian Faith, like Charles C. Hennell, Charles Bray and William Rathbone Greg, claimed for the most part that their works were not antagonistic to spiritual

truth, and that they only desired to emancipate the human mind from superstition and rid belief of its discrepancies and contradictions. Francis Newman, a younger brother of the Cardinal, whose works—*The Soul, Its Sorrows and Aspirations,* and *Phases of Faith*—had some vogue in their day, renounced the Christian faith and voiced the negative reaction of the age. He sought to deliver the spirit from all forms of creed and definition, and fix the mind upon God alone and the first principles of truth. In this connection the name of George Eliot, who stands among the greatest of English novelists, distinguished not less for her reflective power than her subtle delineations of character, must be mentioned. Few writers have exercised a greater influence upon the age than the author of *Adam Bede* and *Romola*. Strangely dependent on others' judgment and admiration, yet also strangely reticent and self-reliant, her life is a problem and a mystery. Led too easily by minds greatly inferior to her own, she early shed her religious belief; but through the years she waited 'forlorn,' wistfully looking for a return of her youthful faith, which a powerful but disintegrating intellect withheld to the last. Mr. Myers tells us[1] how, as he walked with her once at Cambridge in the Fellows' Garden of Trinity, she spoke of three words "which have been used so often as the inspiring trumpet-calls of men—God, Immortality, Duty"; yet she said with terrible earnestness, "how inconceivable was the first, how unbelievable was the second, yet how peremptory and absolute the third." Early in her life there vanished almost without a sign her faith in God and hope of immortality; but as the years passed there was more

[1] Quoted by R. H. Hutton, *Modern Guides to English Thought in Matters of Faith*, p. 153.

and more effort to enforce the theme of duty in her works, though she failed to afford a very happy exposition of it in her private history. But no writer has more successfully thrown around the experiences of common humanity the spirit of idealization and the charm of literary genius, giving to life and its ordinary joys and sorrows an elevation and nobility which borrowed not a little from the religion she renounced. As closely associated with George Eliot, George Henry Lewes acquired some celebrity; though on his own account, as a writer interested in subjects bordering on philosophy and science, he exercised considerable influence between the years 1840 and 1860. In his attitude to religion Lewes was frankly negative. He was a disciple of Comte, and like the French philosopher wished to banish metaphysical and theological studies entirely, as wholly valueless in the interpretation of life. His *Biographical History of Philosophy* was written to show that there is no such thing as philosophy, and that all mental speculation must give place to scientific research, by which alone assured results can be obtained.

James Anthony Froude, the distinguished historian, may also be mentioned here. The friend and disciple of Carlyle, he has given us among his other literary and historical works, a picture of his master which, though grossly onesided and inadequate as a portrait of the seer of Chelsea, is likely to remain one of the great and formative books of the nineteenth century. Of the writings of Froude, which more particularly deal with religious problems, note may be taken of *Shadows of the Clouds*, published in 1847, and *The Nemesis of Faith*, issued two years later. The first of these books is distinctly autobiographical, depicting its hero drifting from a narrow orthodoxy to a more

enlightened faith. The volume is a protest against the trammels of a hard, mechanical religion and a plea for the right of each man to build up his own character by the exercise of personal judgment and self-reliance. *The Nemesis of Faith* is a romance whose negative tendencies led to its author having to resign his Oxford fellowship. It is the story of a man who, in spite of his doubts, becomes ordained, but soon gives way to the dictates of romantic passion. He is saved by a priest from committing suicide, and is induced to enter the Romish Church. His religious difficulties, intensified by remorse of conscience, come back in fiercer shapes, making his last estate worse than his first. It is the nemesis, not of faith, but of unfaith and disloyalty to truth. Froude somewhat later found deliverance from uncertainty in Carlyle's teaching who, he tells us, saved him from "Positivism, or Romanism, or Atheism." "Carlyle taught me a creed which I could accept as really true, and which I have held ever since with increasing confidence as the interpretation of my existence and the guide of my conduct." [1]

II

Of all the writers of the century outside the distinctively religious field, Thomas Carlyle is undoubtedly the greatest. It is not too much to say that the religious thinking of our time has taken very largely its tone and trend from his teaching. Speaking of Carlyle and J. S. Mill, Tulloch says, "there is a sense in which both represent the negative attitude to historical religion which has grown strong in our day;

[1] Froude, *Carlyle's Later Life*, vol. i. p. 291.

but there is also a sense in which both, and especially Carlyle, have contributed to enlighten and enlarge the sphere of religious thought." [1] He was for many years before his death, as R. H. Hutton has remarked, what his great hero, Goethe, was to Germany—the aged seer whose personal judgments on men and things were everywhere sought after, chronicled and detailed.[2] But he was more disposed to sympathize with Goethe's destructive than constructive judgments. Carlyle was the great idol-breaker of his age. He was like some Hebrew prophet whose mission it was to smite the hypocrisies of his countrymen. "If I were asked," to quote again Mr. Hutton's penetrative estimate, "what his genius did for English thought and literature, I should say that it did chiefly the work of a sort of spiritual volcano—showed us the perennial fires subversive of worn-out creeds which lie concealed in vast stores beneath the surface of society." [3] Yet, unquestionably the object of his teaching was reconstructive, and it is as a positive religious power, as a champion of reality and righteousness—the matching of the "Everlasting NO" by the mightier affirmation of the "Everlasting YEA," that he lives to-day.

The life of Carlyle has often been dealt with, and is indeed almost too well known. We have been more than satiated with a copious Carlyle biographical literature. His own early reminiscences are among the most beautiful things he has written; and the pictures of the scenes of his childhood and early surroundings at Ecclefechan, of his father and mother and their homely piety and frugal life, from whom he inherited his best qualities—"their pious, heaven-

[1] *Movements of Religious Thought*, p. 171.

[2] *Modern Guides of English Thought in Matters of Faith*, p. 1.

[3] *Idem*, p. 2.

sent influences"; his life at Mainhill and Craigenputtock, and his youthful struggles and writings; his meeting with Irving and Jane Welsh, his wife —these will ever remain as among the finest delineations and portraitures of our language, showing in the light which they shed upon Carlyle himself, that he was a peasant to the last, retaining much of the simplicity and robustness of life and faith in which he had been reared, and something too of its harshness and rigidity.

Carlyle never entered the ministry of the Church, as his parents had hoped he would. There is no evidence that he ever carefully studied or sought to understand the real essence of Christian truth. He was early assailed with doubt, and gradually formed the conviction that the Christianity of the Church was "intellectually incredible." In a memorable conversation with Irving, as they sat among the "peat hags of Drumclog Moss, under the silent night skies," he made the confession to his friend that "he did not think as he of the Christian Religion." But even in the depths of his blackest despair the idea of God and duty survived; and there is no more significant passage in all his writings than that in *Sartor Resartus*, where he describes his deliverance from the grip of the Devil. "The Everlasting NO has said, Behold, Thou art fatherless, outcast, and the Universe is mine (the Devil's); to which my whole ME now made answer; 'I am not thine, but FREE, and forever hate thee.' From this hour I incline to date my spiritual new birth."[1]

With Carlyle's political writings we have no concern beyond what they reveal of his view of life as a whole. Mr. Hutton says, "over practical politics he wielded

[1] *Sartor*, bk. ii. chap. vii.

no direct power." Certainly it would be difficult to say whether he was a Tory or a Whig, for he flings projectiles at both. But a Radical he assuredly was ; for what else can he be who writes that "all ranks, dignities, institutions, creeds, are but the clothes, often threadbare enough, wherewith the human spirit patches its nakedness and masquerades in the world's eye." And when in *Chartism* and *Past and Present* he attacks political questions, he is radical to the core. If not a political writer of the sort of Bentham, Cobden or Bright, it is doubtful if anyone has produced a more powerful effect upon the political creed of our country. He has been called the apostle of democracy. And it is true that like Mazzini he never tires of proclaiming the dignity, and indeed the divinity, of the individual man. "Through every living soul the glory of a present God still beams." The veriest human scarecrow, he tells us, holds his title of manhood from the Maker direct. And no champion of democracy has spoken as he has of "the Peasant-Saint," or done more to dignify the toil of honest poverty. But for the most part he seems to believe rather in the power of heroes. If he honours democracy he does not scruple to tell it frankly its faults, and remind the people that what they need most of all is the guidance of elect souls. He is also the prophet of work. But work in his mind is not for selfish ends but "for spiritual bread." Even in the most humble and illiterate, it is never the mere work done that commands his reverence. It is the doing of the work with fidelity as under the great Task-Master's eye. Carlyle has been charged with teaching the monstrous doctrine, that 'Might is Right,' and he has been accused of idealising mere physical force. But the very opposite is Carlyle's meaning. When Mr. Lecky accused him of making

might the symbol of right, he rejoined, "I shall have to tell Lecky one day that quite the converse or *re*verse is the great and venerable author's real opinion, viz. that Right is the eternal symbol of Might." Right, he held, stands distinct from wrong in the very decrees of God, and there is no faith that finds more passionate and constant reiteration in his writings than that the old eternal laws of which God is the embodiment cannot be without their witness upon the earth, sooner or later to find enactment. He has been stigmatized also as the "ferocious apostle of revenge," and the prophet of pessimism and decadence. He is certainly no light-hearted optimist, nor does he easily condone crime. If he stands for one thing more than another it is the declaration of the stern law of retribution, the law of righteousness written "on the adamant tablet" by the finger of Justice.

Carlyle is no mere politician. He is before all else a moralist who applies his ethic of right to every sphere of public and private life. He is no partisan or opportunist. He does not speak for to-day or to-morrow. He would see all things *sub specie aeternitatis*. In Emerson's striking phrase, "The politics of a higher region encompass him." His entire interpretation of nature, the world and man, is based upon the conviction of the reality and eternity of God. All else is mutable, temporary and fleeting. But behind is the enduring background—the 'Immensities,' the 'Veracities.' The chief lesson which *Sartor Resartus* seeks to teach is that all visible things are but emblems. There is an infinite Mind at work behind the outward phenomena of the universe. "What is man himself but a symbol of God? Is not all that he does symbolic—a revelation of sense to the mystic God-given power that is in him? Not a hut he builds but is the

visible embodiment of a thought, but leaves visible record of invisible things, but is in the transcendental sense symbolical as well as real." [1] "The universe is, as Goethe says, a living garment of Deity, a garment through which He reveals Himself to the eye of poet and prophet, and in a measure to everyone who is prepared to see." [2] Hence he is continually enforcing the lesson of what he calls "Natural Supernaturalism"; by which he means that, whatever may be thought of special miracles, the whole world is miraculous. For what was a miracle supposed to be? It was man's way of affirming that the spirit is more than matter. But Natural Supernaturalism is the discovery that the natural world is itself the symbol or vesture of a divine power which also manifests itself in a higher way in human history, as a divine justice which is always executing itself upon men and nations.[3] And so, further, Carlyle believes that it is impossible for man fully to express the truth of things. We only discover some partial symbol, some shadow of the truth which fades away if we do not translate it into life. The history of religion is thus but the history of the different symbols which have been successively adopted, and then cast aside like worn-out clothes in order that humanity might reclothe itself in some new robe of faith. Carlyle was convinced that his own age was one of hypocrisy, an age in which the symbols had worn thin and religion had lost its meaning. The world had become a piece of dead mechanism, and even man himself had become but a part of a machine. All sense of social unity was forgotten. *Laissez-faire* has become the sole policy of government and "cash payment the sole nexus of man to man." It seemed

[1] *Sartor*, bk. i. chap. viii. [2] *Idem.*

[3] Cf. Edward Caird, *Essays on Literature*, p. 235.

to him that the old Deistic idea of God still prevailed. The world was regarded "as an old eight-day clock made many thousand years ago, and still ticking on, but dead as brass, which the maker at most sat looking at, in a distant, singular, and now plainly indeed incredible manner."

The life-work of Carlyle was the declaration or reassertion of three fundamental truths; the Reality and Immanence of God, the wonder and mystery of the universe as the living utterance of God, and the grandeur of Man's duty and destiny. In almost every book, on almost every page, the reader is confronted with these verities as the basal facts of human history and experience. There is probably more of the Old Testament in Carlyle's teaching than of the New. But if we miss something of the tenderness and grace, and even hopefulness of the Son of Man, we must not forget that this stern prophet of our times held in highest reverence the Christ of history. What language of faith can surpass in beauty or appreciation this? —"Look on our Divinest Symbol: on Jesus of Nazareth, and His Life, and His Biography, and what followed therefrom. Higher has human thought not yet reached; this is Christianity and Christendom; a symbol of quite perennial, infinite character; whose significance will ever require to be anew inquired into, and anew made manifest."[1] His aversion to professional Christianity grew out of the general tendency of his mind to cast aside all dead forms as he conceived them. But if he was unable to accept Revelation "technically so called," he was still less disposed to acknowledge the creed of materialism. Nor could he endure with patience the new Evolution Theory as a final explanation of the origin and nature of man.

[1] *Sartor*, bk. iii. chap. iii.

All such efforts were to him mere "mud philosophies." "God was for him the fact of facts," says Froude. "He was a Calvinist without the theology." And if there was any disposition to discredit the Biblical account of Revelation, he never doubted the divine government of the world as the surest reality of the universe. With all a Puritan's faith and fervour he ceased not to preach the eternal righteousness of the divine kingdom and the inflexible import of the moral law. One misses only the note of the Divine Fatherhood and the everlasting mercy that seeks the sinner even while condemning his sin.

It is now all but forty years since Carlyle was laid to rest in the quiet graveyard of Ecclefechan in the homeland of his fathers. Has his influence waxed or waned in the interval? It is difficult to answer. One is inclined to think that the younger generation do not read his works with the avidity of his contemporaries. But, on the other hand, much of his teaching is incorporated in the books of the day; and, therefore, his potency over the minds that count in the moulding of the higher thought of the world is probably as vital and fresh as ever.

In many fields of human interest Carlyle was a pathfinder, and his adventures in historical and social philosophy are characterized by both the exaggeration and the originality of the pioneer. His hero-worship, for example, if we interpret it to mean admiration for the drastic force of the masterful autocrat, as in Cromwell, Napoleon and Frederick, has been discredited by the type of 'Superman' which Nietzsche and his school have made familiar. But if we take it, as we believe Carlyle intended, to signify, "not brute force but moral greatness," [1] the supremacy of the spirit, then,

[1] See *Characteristics.*

if we mistake not, Carlyle has struck out a great and living conception which is going to become one of the shaping forces of modern history, "thought kindling itself at the fire of living thought." The hero in this sense is the central fact of every experience. It is the vision of the higher man, the ideal looming on the horizon of humanity that lures us on to nobler endeavour and a better age. In heroes of such quality the hope of the world rests.

Then again Carlyle's passion for social reform, his burning exposure of the wrongs of poverty and the unfulfilled obligations of wealth, whatever they were thought of in his own time, have found in our day a vigorous response. The gospel of work, of a living wage, of a decent house, of provision against old age and sickness, and of spiritual and mental sustenance, as well as physical, which the author of *Past and Present* never wearies of preaching, is now the commonplace of social betterment.

Finally, in the sphere of intellectual and moral life, no writer has done more to elevate and purify the ideals of man and keep before the world the supreme value of faith and the deathless imperative of duty. Carlyle was one of the first to reveal the wealth of European literature and to lift his country out of its insularity by making it the sharer of the larger world of thought that lies beyond our shores. Moreover, at a time when a narrow individualism and a sordid utilitarian philosophy were dominating our political creed he sounded the 'reveille' of a higher idealism and sought to recall his countrymen to the reality of the things of the spirit.

Duty and the Ideal—these are the foci of Carlyle's philosophy. The student of religious thought cannot fail to note that a return to these ultimate facts of

experience as the basis of all Christian thinking and living is being strongly emphasized to-day. "The Christian's consciousness that God communes with him rests on two objective facts; the first is the historical fact of the Person of Jesus. . . . The second objective ground is that we hear within ourselves the demand of the moral law." These words of Professor Herrmann of Marburg are the keynote of his well-known work, *Communion with God*.[1] A modern writer does not hesitate to affirm that these thoughts which are the ground principles of positive Christian theology to-day are "familiar to the reader of Carlyle in every variety of emphatic language." [2]

III

Hardly less potent as a moral force, while more distinctively Christian in his religious teaching, with Carlyle's influence we naturally associate that of John Ruskin. Ruskin shared Carlyle's vision and fervour; and if he did not wield the elder writer's weapons of grim humour and scathing sarcasm, he was not less strong in his reverence for truth and his scorn of shams. To him also God was the great reality; to serve whom not with the lips only, but with mind and heart as well, was the burden of his teaching. Of Puritan stock like his co-worker, his faith was simpler and more gracious, and if he could not be called a Christian of the orthodox sort, his Christianity was essentially real. If he believed with his contemporary in the eternal law of retribution, he believed not less

[1] *Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott*, 2nd. Ed. pp. 80, 81. Eng. trans. p. 103.

[2] T. R. Glover, *Poets and Puritans*. See his fine Essay on Carlyle.

in the redeeming power of sacrifice and attached a profound importance to the mystic passion of the God-Man as the highest symbol and measure of Divine Love.

His three masters, he tells us, were Tintoret, Carlyle, and Turner—the italian painter, the Scottish moralist, and the English interpreter of nature and life. This threefold loyalty indicates the fields in which his interests chiefly lay—his faith in the symbolic message of art, his devotion to the ethical ideal, and his passion for the spiritual culture of his own people. Ruskin was himself an artist of no mean quality. But, above all, he is a painter in words, the peerless master of English prose, who has recreated for us in passages of richest colouring and tone the spiritual meaning of artistic endeavour, whether in canvas or stone. He is the apostle of the beautiful as linked to the true and the good. In discoursing to the students of Oxford on the work of Dürer and Giotto he says: "All such art is wholly good and useful when it is the work of good men."[1] He held that if in a painter there be a want of inward harmony between mind and conscience, in him art and the love of beauty soon languish. In a utilitarian age it would be impossible to exaggerate the value of Ruskin's message in this department to his own and succeeding generations. He is the rediscoverer of the half-forgotten truth, recognized indeed by the early Church, that all beauty in nature and life is a self-manifestation of God; and that the painter as well as the poet and prophet is only true to his highest function when he seeks to be an interpreter of the Divine Mind. His expositions of art as contained in his *Modern Painters*, and *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, are not simply technical

[1] *Lectures on Art*, sect. ii. p. 53.

criticisms of the great works of the past, but are instinct with human interest, throwing light upon the deeper things of life and showing that beauty and art and all the higher efforts of man to express himself in any visible form are vehicles of great spiritual principles. "He should have been a bishop," exclaimed his father. "Everything has a moral and a meaning for him," says Mrs. Ritchie, the daughter of Thackeray, who knew the great trio, Tennyson, Carlyle, and Ruskin, imtimately from her childhood. In a passage in his *Modern Painters*, he himself says, referring to his writings, "Their distinctive character as essays in art is their bringing everything to a root in human passion or in human hope."

One of his favourite themes is what he has called "the law of perfection." We must not prefer the perfection of the lower nature to the imperfection of the higher. For example, in the works of man, "those which are more perfect in their kind are always inferior to those which are, in their nature, liable to more faults and shortcomings. For the finer the nature the more flaws it will show through the clearness of it; and it is a law of this universe, that the best things shall be seldomest seen in their best form. . . . Therefore, while in all things that we see or do, we are to desire perfection and strive for it, we are, nevertheless, not to set the meaner thing, in its narrow accomplishment, above the nobler thing, on its mighty progress." It is the same thought which Browning has developed in Andrea del Sarto, the faultless painter.

> I do what many dream of all their lives,
> Dream ? Strive to do, and agonise to do,
> And fail in doing.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> There burns a truer light of God in them,
> In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped up brain,

. . . . Than goes on to prompt
This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.
Their works drop downward, but themselves, I know,
Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me.

This profound distinction between mechanism and thought, instinct and mind, between the result that is wrought by rôte and the effort of reason, has in these days received a fresh illumination and value from the teaching of Bergson. The truth has a bearing not upon artistic achievement alone, but upon the ethical questions of initiative and responsibility as well as upon all conditions of work and progress. "You must either make a tool of the creature or a man of him," says Ruskin. "Men were not intended to work with the accuracy of tools. If you will have that precision out of them, and make their fingers measure degrees like cog-wheels, you must unhumanize them." Men are more than cogs in a wheel. Is the end of life to make souls or to perfect machines? If Ruskin had done nothing more than to throw out this challenge to his age he should be accounted, along with Carlyle, one of our greatest moral forces. As the *Stones of Venice* is Ruskin's greatest work, so one chapter in it—"The Nature of the Gothic"—is the central point of his whole teaching. It may well be put alongside of the twentieth chapter of Carlyle's *Sartor*. Both are a confession of faith and a call to a higher life. Together they constitute the most momentous utterance of the half century, in which these two prophets of righteousness laboured together. In both cases the appeal is not to despair, but to hope; in both cases it is the protest of the spirit against a philosophy of deadening utilitarianism; and in both cases it is a witness that the voice speaking through man is greater than the man himself.

With the publication of the *Political Economy of Art* in 1857, Ruskin's writings assumed a more aggressively social form, and became the vehicle of a new interpretation of political economy. He aimed now at overthrowing the old traditions of commercial rivalry and revealing the true meaning of wealth, as consisting not in the possession of material things, but in life itself, and all that gives to life its worth and elevation. But, like Carlyle, Ruskin was in advance of his time, and his paradoxes were scorned. When his great revolutionary work, *Unto this Last*, began to appear in the pages of the *Cornhill*, under the editorship of Thackeray, it had actually to be withdrawn on account of the storm of indignation it evoked. It is difficult now to appreciate how unique was the position of Ruskin at this time. To-day his political teaching is widely accepted, even by economists themselves. During the last fifty years legislation has come to adopt many of the principles which in 1860 were ridiculed as the ravings of a dreamer. It may be said that the truths which he preached, then as a voice crying in the wilderness, are now generally regarded as among the ideals of social life; and there is a growing body of writers on economic subjects who acknowledge that co-operation and social integration as well as the mutual interests and closer relations of Capital and Labour are among the agencies which are alone potent to work out our social salvation and bring to the country a new era of prosperity and content; and to mankind, a higher conception of the meaning and value of life.

Reference has already been made to Matthew Arnold's poetry. As an apostle of the negative school he is one of the most representative writers of the second half of the century. He tells us, rather unnecessarily, that

he is no metaphysician. As little can he be regarded as a profound theologian. Some of his prose works are notable. His *Essays in Criticism*—"the central book of his life"—has been pronounced by no less an authority than Mr. Saintsbury, "one of the epoch-making books of the nineteenth century." While his official papers on education, elaborate, sage and conscientious, have rendered good service to the nation, his theological treatises—*Literature and Dogma, God and the Bible,* and *Lay Sermons*—do not now count for much. They attained a modicum of success when published, but they suffer from paradox and profusion, as well as inaccuracy and lack of expert knowledge. Hardly happy adventures, they have lost any significance they may once have had. Certain phrases coined by Arnold were in vogue for a time; such as his definition of God—"The Power not ourselves, which makes for Righteousness;" and of religion—"Morality touched with emotion." He had a following of kindred spirits and instituted a "cult" which had for its motto, "Sweetness and Light." Notwithstanding a certain mannerism and pose his heart was in the right place. His sympathies were with the things which make for righteousness; and his life was better and greater than his creed. In helping his countrymen to appreciate the higher literature of Germany as well as some of the finer spirits of French culture he exerted an educative and enlarging influence upon his time. It is as a poet, however, that he will live. There he has a place of originality and security. If he has not, to use William Watson's suggestive phrase, "The deep authentic mountain thrill" of his master, Wordsworth, the music of Tennyson, or the buoyancy of Browning, there is a wholesome quality of serenity, restraint and pensive pathos in his verse which is at once chastening and invigorating.

IV

Over against the Agnostic philosophy of Mill and Huxley, Lewes and Spencer, there arose about "the 'seventies" a phase of idealism to which the name of Neo-Hegelianism has been assigned. It took its start chiefly in Oxford; and among its representatives may be numbered Jowett, T. H. Green, Nettleship, Edward Caird; and later, William Wallace, Bradley and Bosanquet. The idealistic interpretation of life presented by these teachers was a protest against the materialistic assumptions of natural science which, apparently supported by the high authority of Spencer and Huxley, were gaining wide acceptance. Writers like James Martineau, Principal Fairbairn and Arthur Balfour, though far from accepting the Hegelian creed, joined hands with the thinkers just mentioned in contending for a more spiritual conception of reality.

In some respects Green was the most notable figure in English thought of this period. He died in 1882 at the early age of forty-six. He is the prototype of "Grey" in Mrs. Humphry Ward's novel, *Robert Elsmere*, which created some stir in the theological world of its day. Green's influence on the liberal thought of the country was second to none. His *Prolegomena to Ethics* is among the great books of our literature. Green called himself a Christian, and he identified his ethical teaching with the ideals of Christianity. But his interests were not confined to philosophy. He preached a practical Gospel, the social and economic principles of which were taken up by Arnold Toynbee, Canon Barnett, and a band of earnest Oxford students, and applied to the practical problems of

living in East London. The gospel of work, of art and social effort, proclaimed by men like Ruskin and Carlyle, found an echo in this new movement which gave to Christian faith a strongly ethical character.

The emphasis thus laid upon action and practical service in the interpretation of life's values found sympathetic response in another school of thought, to which the name of Pragmatism has been given, and whose originator was the late William James of Harvard. This form of activism has been adopted with enthusiasm both on the Continent and in Britain. It has a certain kinship with the philosophy of Bergson. James and Bergson are united in their repudiation of the doctrine of the absolute, and their attitude to the problem of reality takes the form of a reaction against the over-emphasis of intellectualism in philosophy. The world is not a finished product, they tell us. It is still in the making. Reality is not a definite and static goal. It is to be realized and " made " through the conflicts and hazards of life. Truth is not objective, but instrumental. That only has the value of truth which works, which best serves the needs of practical life. We must not consider things as they are in themselves, but in their reference to the good of mankind as a whole. The hypothesis which, on the whole, works best, which most aptly fits the circumstances of a particular case, is true. It is useless, for example, to speculate about the existence of God. If the hypothesis of Deity works satisfactorily, says James, if the best results for the well-being of humanity follow from believing in a God, then the hypothesis may be taken as true. It is true for us. Truth, according to Pragmatism, has no independent existence. It is wholly subjective, relative ; its test is its utility. But to the common mind this view of truth would seem to

contradict the very idea of truth and to be subversive of all moral values. If truth has no independent validity, if it is not something to be sought for itself irrespective of the interests and inclinations of man, then its pursuit can bring no real enrichment to our spiritual being. It remains something alien and external, a mere arbitrary appendix to the self. It cannot be the essence and standard of human life. "Truth," says Eucken, "can only exist as an end in itself. Instrumental truth is no truth." [1]

This subjective tendency, following another line, may be seen also in the recent revival of Mysticism in religious circles. Mysticism discovers in the doctrine of the supremacy of self-consciousness the key to the fullness of divine realization and the secret of intimate communion with God. In the higher Mysticism of our day "will" and "vision" have become one, says Miss Underhill.[2] It is no idle immersion of the self in ecstatic emotion. In so far as it is a mental quest for the real and true, involving struggle and elevation of self above the passing world it is a phase of religious life which is not without beneficent influence. It makes its quiet protest against the passion for pleasure and unnatural excitement which has possessed so large a portion of mankind in our day.

But all these forms of psychological approach towards reality do not carry us far. They may be styled "short-cuts" of the spirit; and like most short-cuts, only entangle those who follow them in fresh mazes of confusion.

Psychology can show how men came to believe this or that. But it cannot assure us that *this* or *that* is true. It leaves us in the realm of relativity, and opens the door for all kinds of utilitarian philosophy

[1] *Main Currents of Thought*, p. 78. [2] *The Mystic Way*.

and capricious subjectivism.[1] There is an ominous distrust of reason abroad and a tendency to rest in mere intuition. Everywhere the praises of instinct and feeling are sung, and the perils of intellectualism proclaimed. But notwithstanding the suggestiveness of the Bergsonian philosophy, and its merits in directing attention to neglected elements of experience, one has the feeling that the doctrine of the "Élan," the unconscious impulse cutting channels for itself through opposing matter, is based upon a false metaphor, and is fraught with dangerous consequences in its applications to social and religious life.[2] The present day disparagement of reason, if carried to extremes, is suicidal. The true progress of man surely depends, not on a return to blind intuition, but in the gradual intellectualization of our instincts.

If religion is to maintain its power as the controlling and inspiring energy of life, it must not be reduced to mere feeling or emptied of all objective content: but translated into thought, will and action, and thus made expressive of the whole personality of man. Feeling is but the mirror which reflects ideas and ideals.[3] Of itself it creates nothing. "It is," as Hegel taught, "in itself neither good nor bad, neither true nor untrue." Feeling must be permeated by thought, and find its utterance and outcome in knowledge, love and life. The energy of faith is not thought detached from action, nor action detached from thought, but what St. Paul calls a λογικὴ λατρεία.[4]

[1] Witness the present day craze for "Spiritualism."

[2] For example the late outburst of Syndicalism in France, which claimed Bergson as its inspiration!

[3] See Inge, *Faith and its Psychology*, p. 67.

[4] Rom. xii. 1; Service which is not λογική is not appropriate to a being whose essence is logos, *i.e.* reason or spirit. See Denney, *Expositor's Greek Testament.*

" Think not the Faith by which the just shall live
Is a dead creed, a map correct of heaven,
Far less a feeling fond and fugitive,
A thoughtless gift, withdrawn as soon as given :
It is an affirmation and an act
That bids eternal truth be present fact." [1]

Hartley Coleridge, quoted by Inge, *Psychology of Faith*.

CHAPTER XVII

PAST AND PRESENT

BEFORE bringing our studies to a close we may take a glance back on the way we have travelled and a look forward to the road before us. The last few years are too near us to permit of a just estimate being formed of their meaning or an adequate appraisement of their significance for the future. The Second Decade of the New Century will be for ever memorable by reason of the world-war which, like some mighty convulsion of nature, has overwhelmed in the cataclysm all physical and spiritual treasures. The spiritual forces of the past, if not destroyed, have been strangely deflected, and, it may be permanently, altered. This work was planned before the tragedy of 1914 had burst upon us. It has been written with the horror of it ever present. Some inevitable references have crept in here and there. But no special attempt has been made to show its bearing upon present-day thought. Whatever may be the import of the war for the new world that is to arise out of the ruins of the old, the task of determining its spiritual value and describing its influence belongs chiefly to the writers of the next generation.

I

Our study has been mainly historical, and our present enquiry must be: What legacy have we of to-day inherited from the ages preceding our own? The present is the outcome of the past. The forces which fashion the thought of to-day have been set in motion centuries ago and have grown with cumulative momentum. Nothing really valuable in thought is lost. "Beware," says Emerson, "when the great God sets loose a thinker in this planet. Then all things are at risk. It is as when a conflagration has broken out in a great city, and no man knows what is safe or where it will end." [1] The world has been made by thoughts as much as by deeds, and by books more than by battles. There is no magic like the magic of great thoughts. There is an evolution of ideas, an increasing movement of spirit which moulds for good or ill each new age and swells the stream of influence operating upon our day. The twentieth century is the heir of all the centuries, the resultant of complementary and sometimes conflicting forces. The religious world is conscious that it has within it the work of all the pioneers who struck out the ideals which are as yet only dimly perceived and but partially fulfilled. The poets, philosophers and scientists have bequeathed their ideas and achievements to their successors—and out of the accumulated materials of the ages we are summoned to build the edifice of our spiritual life. Luther and Calvin, Bossuet and Pascal, Hooker and Butler, Goethe and Kant, Schleiermacher and Hegel, Coleridge and Carlyle, Maurice and McLeod Campbell, to name but a few at random of our teachers,

[1] *Emerson's Essays*, 1st Series, "Circles."

are living to-day and making our thought-world. The Reformers and the Humanists, the Puritans and Anglo-Catholics, the Deists and Evangelicals, the French 'Philosophes,' the German Idealists, the English Moralists, the Mystics, and apostles of social righteousness and liberty—all are factors of the complex world of thought and action of which we are the heritors and trustees.

Some ages are greater than others, and some have contributed more to the march of civilization—but all are links in the chain of continuity. All things considered, the Victorian era is among the great epochs of the world's history, and by its character and achievements has given to Britain a foremost place among the nations. Its shortcomings have often been paraded. Its self-complacency and insular pride, its vulgar commercialism and defective sense of beauty; its egotism and hypocrisy: the blindness of the middle classes to the industrial conditions which provoked chartism, and later social and labour disorder: the contempt and indifference of the nobility in regard to the problems of the age—have called forth, at different times, the sarcasm of some of our home writers, and the not too friendly criticism of foreign peoples.

Yet its faults were due to circumstances in which no country could have maintained a perfect balance of mind. Its growing wealth and prosperity were its peril. The sudden opening of the world's markets to British goods and the equally sudden enrichment of a people who had originally few traditions of culture: the inflow of new ideas strangely conflicting with its past customs and conventions—these constituted at once a test and a challenge, and called for readjustments and new valuations of thought and life

which required no ordinary sanity of mind. The latter half of the century, not for Britain alone, but for the whole of Western Europe, was a time of seething problems. Two worlds were in conflict—matter and spirit were struggling together for the ascendancy. The revolution which came to a head in 1914 was already menacing Western Europe. The idea of material force, elemental in human nature, was beginning to take shape, and was threatening all spiritual faith and achievement. In the half century preceding the war, at the centre of every movement of opinion in the West, one striking fact is paramount. There was a growing idea that in the relation of nations, in business, in labour, in politics, in science and art, in literature, and in the whole realm of economic and social activity—force must dominate, and the issues at stake can be settled only by a conflict of material powers. There is a gradual falling back upon crude physical principles, "a retreat all along the line to those conditions of elemental force under which the civilization of the West first came into being." [1] It has been truly pointed out that the Darwinian thesis, which had its birth in the middle of the century, had a remarkable effect on civilization. It presented to the masters of force a conception of the world which they rendered exclusively in terms of conflict and struggle. "It was not science," says Benjamin Kidd, "which created the universal fame of the Darwinian conception." It was rather the half-formed pagan mind of our civilization. For centuries the Western pagan had struggled with the ideals of a religion of renunciation coming to him from the past. For centuries he had "stiffly bowed his armoured

[1] See a powerful account of the world revolution in Kidd's *Science of Power*, pp. 9 ff.

back to the ideals presented to him by the Churches of Christendom," but mostly without inward comprehension. But here at last, in this Darwinian theory, was a conception of life which he could understand. "The pagan heart of the West sang within itself again in atavistic joy."[1] Its Schopenhauers, its Haeckels, its Nietzsches, its Weinigers, its Wagners and Treitschkes became the prophets and interpreters of a meaning in the world which the masters of force could appreciate, and which they were determined to make supreme.

Within half a century the "origin of species" had become the Bible of the doctrine of the omnipotence of force. On the continent of Europe the extraordinary position was soon reached in which Darwin's theory was openly set forth in political and military textbooks as the full justification for war and highly organized schemes of national policy in which the doctrine of Force became the doctrine of Right, and was pronounced to be the basis of all legal authority. The champions of Might gradually became the 'Supermen' of popular philosophy, and in political science the dictum prevailed—"those who have the power have the right to rule." In Britain and the United States, it is noteworthy that Darwinism was not pressed to this extreme, although even in these countries the 'origin of species' was regarded as a generalized conception of the effectiveness of commercial competition. The social struggle which Maurice, Ruskin and others had condemned, but which Bentham and the Mills, and the English utilitarian school of Economists generally, had acclaimed as the very nerve of progress, seemed to be justified at last by Darwin's principles. Not co-operation or mutual service, but

[1] *Idem*, p. 10.

self-centred individualism—each struggling for his own interests—appeared to the student of science to be the basal fact in the world's evolution.

"The great Pagan Retrogression," as Kidd calls it, resting on Darwinianism, began in Germany, and its chief promoter was Haeckel, who was followed by Nietzsche, and a powerful group of scientific and political writers throughout Europe. Haeckel's popularisation of Darwin may be best studied in his *Riddle of the Universe*. In this work all the ideas revolve round a single fundamental conception. According to Haeckel there exists in the ordinary man a kind of dualism between himself and society, between the good of himself and the good of the world. But, says Haeckel, there is really no such dualism. Man is simply a "social vertebrate." His social duties and his duties to himself are one and grow from the same root. So-called "altruism," or the good of others, "is only enlightened egoism" for the good of oneself. This is Haeckel's system of monistic ethics. The "Categorical Imperative," which demands the sacrifice of self, he calls "Kant's curious idol." And the ethics of the Founder of Christianity is pronounced to be "as useless in practice as it is unnatural." [1]

Nietzsche goes further in his application of Darwin's theory to life. "I impeach the greatest blasphemy in time—the religion which has enchained and softened us." "What have we to do with herd-morality, which expresses itself in modern democracy? . . . It is good for cows, women and Englishmen." He turns, therefore, to voice the doctrine of the 'Superman.' "A new table I set over you. Oh, my brethren, '*Become hard.*'" [2] "The best things belong to us, the best food, the purest sky, the fairest women,

[1] *Riddle of the Universe*, chap. xix. [2] *The Twilight of the Idols.*

the strongest thoughts. And if men do not give us these things, we take them." [1]

These are the doctrines which we have seen gradually developing in the national life and policy of Germany, and attaining to practical realization in the German adventure of 1914.

This philosophy of force has infected every country, and has given volume to the great wave of materialism that swept over Europe at end of last century.[2]

But Haeckel and his followers have misapplied the principles of Darwin : or rather applied them to departments of life and thought where they do not hold good. As we have seen in an earlier chapter, this doctrine has nothing to do with the science of civilization. It is the doctrine of the efficiency of the animal alone. The collective efficiency in the social and moral world is founded on the supremacy of mind and the psychic emotions. The first principle in the evolution of civilization lies in the subordination of individuals to the social ideal. The ascending history of the human race is nothing else than the growing application of the law of co-operation, service and sacrifice. As has been well said by the author already quoted, " the story of the evolution above savagery is nothing else than the story of the gradual rise to supremacy in the world of these psychic forces organized in civilization, which are subduing individuals or aggregations of individuals, efficient in their own interests, to those universal principles which are making for the limitless efficiency of civilization." [3]

[1] *Zarathustra.*

[2] " A new definition of the State has emerged, as superior to all moral law, affecting all international and social problems." See Lord Bryce's Introduction to Sedgwick's famous *Essays on National and International Right and Wrong.*

[3] Kidd, *op. cit.* chap. v.

There have been, fortunately, other voices raised in protest against the pagan cult of force. The spirit of idealism was not dead. In the hour of battle between right and might, between materialism and spiritualism, there were not wanting those in more than one country of the world who were ready not to speak only, but to act. What distinguished Britain from many Continental nations, says Mr. Asquith, in his recent Romanes Lecture at Oxford,[1] was the new wealth of spiritual life which came to the country in her time of need, and enabled her to adapt herself with energy and hope to new conditions. The century crowned by the Victorian era has been named in the fine phrase of Mr. Marvin, "The Century of Hope."[2] It contained the seeds and potencies of great achievements. So far from its being a decadent age it was one full of vitality and promise. It reared a race whose sons—not soft and luxurious, as they were depicted, but strong and hardy, disciplined by homely virtues—rose up as one man, in the next generation, to do battle for righteousness and freedom. Among its legacies to its successor, higher than material wealth and scientific achievement, we have those spiritual qualities of manhood and faith and idealism; those elements of integrity, of public-mindedness and self-sacrifice, which have never been wanting, indeed, in the British race, but which came once more to the front in the hour of peril. It was in the homes of simple piety and godly virtue, in the quiet towns and country places of the British Isles, in the straths of the Scottish Highlands, in the teeming centres of toil and commerce, and in the colonies beyond the seas, that the youth of the Empire were reared who counted their lives not dear to them in the ordeal of battle.

[1] "Some Aspects of the Victorian Era."

[2] The title of a suggestive book just published.

II

Of the religious situation of to-day it is difficult to speak in confident terms. Though the great spiritual forces of the past are not spent, new factors have entered which complicate the position. If religion is to rise anew from the ruins of a life that has suffered shock and change, it must base itself upon fresh ground with complete abandonment of prejudice: and even that which men feel to be eternal in its nature must assume new forms befitting the new conditions. In one sense the air has been clarified—and the issue has been sharpened. It has become convincingly clear that we are being thrown back upon first principles. In the general upheaval we have been brought face to face with the primal realities, and it is not wonderful that the conflict is no longer regarding the mere accessories and minutiæ of religion, but concerning the very meaning and rationality of life as a whole.

"The greatest problem of the day," says a recent writer,[1] "indeed the only problem—is, What is the meaning of life itself? Is it to be explained in terms of matter, or in terms of spirit? We must assume that which is the postulate of all thinking, that reason is sovereign. We shall not minimise the place of the emotions or the will in the search of truth; but we assert at the outset as fundamental, that what is not rational is not true; that what is beyond the sphere of reason is beyond the sphere of existence."

There are many to-day, who, though not satisfied with the traditional types of orthodoxy with which they have been long familiar, feel themselves up against the ultimates of life, and are determined to sift the

[1] *The Open Light*, by Nathaniel Micklem.

question of religion to the bottom. They feel that true religion is not a mere adjunct or accessory to life. It is everything or nothing ; and must be based upon absolute truthfulness and personal conviction. This phase of thought prevalent among our younger men to-day, is profoundly interesting and, as it seems to us, augurs well for the future. There is great hope for our age which is thus determined to confront honestly and courageously the problems of life ; and here lies at once the church's opportunity and challenge. Life is pulsating afresh in many new directions, and no one who ignores these later developments or minimises their importance, can claim to read aright the signs of the times.[1]

This revival of religious interest is not confined to one country alone. Indeed, it is more patent in some continental nations than in Britain or America. Even before the war there were evidences in Germany that the day of Idealism was returning and that in the universities the teachers of philosophy and theology were becoming more positive in their attitude to Christian truth. The names of Harnack and Seeberg of Berlin, Herrmann of Marburg, Rudolf Otto of Göttingen, Ernst Troeltsch of Heidelberg, Haering of Tübingen, Schäder of Kiel, and Eucken of Jena—to mention but a few of the more prominent leaders of religious thought of the present day—testify to the existence of a profounder appreciation, and the need of a more adequate interpretation of the Christian faith than formerly prevailed in continental seats of learning. Nor is this awakening confined to Germany alone. The 'Modernist' movement in Roman Catholic circles, particularly in Italy and France, is also a

[1] See Eucken's *Christianity and the New Idealism*, p. 126, where an interesting account of the present situation is given.

significant sign of the times. One needs only to think in this connection of the labours of such men as Dom Romolo Murri of Italy, M. Loisy of France, and Cardinal Mercier of Belgium—who are fighting for ethical and political liberty, as well as the spiritual enfranchisement of their co-religionists—to realise the strength and widespread influence of this recrudescence of religious interest.[1] On the philosophical side we must not forget such names as Bergson and Boutroux of France, whose significance lies in their powerful advocacy of a spiritual interpretation of life, as against an iron determinism on the one hand and a crude naturalism on the other : and that of Benedetto Croce, the great speculative thinker of Italy, of whom Mr. Ainslie,[2] perhaps somewhat extravagantly, affirms, "as Michel Angelo built the Vatican, so Benedetto Croce has built the philosophy of the spirit." Mr. A. J. Balfour and Professor Saintsbury are among Croce's admirers in this country, and speak enthusiastically of his original outlook upon life. Croce is an objective idealist. For him, as for Hegel, the real is the rational, and the rational the real. But the interesting point of his philosophy is the stress he lays upon the spirit, which he identifies with reality as a whole. Everywhere he contends powerfully for an ethical view of life. Thought and will are the two energies of the spirit which give dignity and strength and freedom to man.

Nor in our brief survey of the recent signs of a spiritual renewal in Europe must we omit Russia—that land of sorrow and mystery and mighty possibilities. The country of Tolstoy and Dostoievsky, and

[1] See George Tyrrell, *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, who stands for the movement in England.

[2] See Introduction to translation of *Philosophy of the Practical*, by Benedetto Croce.

many other profound thinkers, has produced a writer who is greater than any of them, Vladimir Solovyof. He is Russia's profoundest philosopher and one of her greatest poets. In national culture he was a disciple of Dostoievsky, and along with him stands for spiritual realities. He is more positive in his teaching than Bergson or Croce. An enlightened disciple of the Greek Church, he combats the literalism of Tolstoy and the agnosticism of French Positiveness—proclaiming with a deep calm and sincerity of conviction the spiritual power of Christianity. His great book, *The Justification of the Good*, is a work of supreme importance for the revelation of Russian ideals, as they exist among the thinking classes. But his book, and his philosophy generally, have a value, not for the land of their origin alone, but for the whole of Europe at this time. Solovyof is essentially the prophet of our era. Not only do we see Russia at its best and highest in his writing, but as the seer of a united humanity and the prophet of the Kingdom of God, we have a vision of a new world as it might be, if Christ, who is the revelation of God and the highest manifestation of the spiritual life of man, could only be vitalized and made a reality in the thought and life of mankind. *The Justification of the Good* is an inspiring book—revealing striking affinities with the philosophic idealism of the West, particularly with that of Eucken and the Neo-Hegelians. The primary data upon which life and religion are built, are, according to Solovyof, threefold—Shame, Pity and Reverence. The feeling of *shame* in man (found in no lower animal), is a proof that man is not merely a link in the sequence of natural phenomena, but has an independent supra-animal significance. *Pity*, or sympathetic feeling, expresses man's moral relation, not to lower nature, but to living beings like

himself. *Reverence* or piety reveals man's relation to the higher principles of spiritual reality, and constitutes the root of religion.

Thus, these three data, belonging to man's inmost being—shame, pity, reverence—relate him to that which is below; to that which is on a level with himself; and to that which is above him. In self-mastery over sense and nature, in sympathy and solidarity with humanity, and in submission to the spirit of all life—man's significance consists. From these fundamental facts all the virtues arise of which *love* is the highest expression and the supreme revelation—the gleam of another world, the link between man and God, the proof of immortality, and the freedom and source of all sacred wisdom and truth—embodied finally in the Christ—the spiritual man.

There are great possibilities hidden in the heart of a people who can produce a thinker of the profundity and largeness of vision of this man; and we need not despair of a land whose best minds accept, as their own, the philosophy of one whom they have acclaimed their supreme prophet and teacher.

When we turn to our own country we find that at the moment no strikingly original thinker in our midst arrests our attention. Broader and more enlightened views obtain. But there is visible in the religious outlook of to-day a lack of certainty and courage. We are still dependent upon the old writers, and draw from the stores of other lands. In the department of philosophy alone can we be said to be striking out new ground. And that is a hopeful sign, since, if we are to build up a native dogmatic, we must examine anew the metaphysical basis of our thought. There is, however, an ominous tendency to adopt Ritschlian methods in an approach

to Christian truth, and to resort to psychological subjective interpretations of religion. But it is well to remember that Religion stands for the conviction that God, and not man, is the measure of things. It represents a truth transcending the opinion and caprice of man, a truth which weighs and judges all man's undertakings. "If there is no such independence of the truth-standard," says Eucken,[1] "there can be no such thing as science or philosophy, no upbuilding of an objective spiritual world." For if there be no standard of truth beyond our own opinions and inclinations, there vanish also all distinction of moral values and all objective sanctions and ideals of life.

In the literature of our country, if not in the actual life of the people, there is without doubt a distinct movement in the direction of Religion. Nor can we fail to detect a revival of intellectual interest in Christianity and a growing desire to understand its problems. There are many, if we may judge from the books we read outside the pale of the directly theological,[2] who have an intuition that in Christianity, or some form of it, there lies the answer to their questionings and the fulfilment of their needs. But this revival is in no sense a return to Christianity in its traditional forms. Missing the way in their quest after culture, these men find themselves thrown back upon some kind of religion—but it is religion of a mystical type divorced from all historical foundations and ecclesiastical institutions. Scholastic methods of apologetic and minute refinements, especially in regard to questions of revelation and atonement, lack reality

[1] *Idem*, p. 130.

[2] See especially the later productions of Wells, and other modern novelists.

for the modern mind. Men yearn for a grasp of truths that grip life at its roots and go down to the source of things. But there is a danger of this age becoming satisfied with a merely natural religion in which all that is distinctive of Christianity—its historical character and its redemptive energy—is left out. If Christian faith is to become a power once more, it must not be conceived as a thing in the air—an ideal without ground of fact. It must be identified with the entry of God into human life ; and the historical personality of Christ must stand in the forefront. But not less important, the redemptive quality of the Christian religion must be emphasized. As a religion of moral renewal, Christianity is pledged to the recognition of a deep schism in man's nature,—a sense of sin, of impotence and dissatisfaction, as well as a consciousness of a better self—which only a divine power can meet and overcome. These two aspects of Christianity must be dominant in any theology that is to afford relief for this or any age.

III

In previous chapters the main currents of religion from the Reformation to the present day have been discussed. It is somewhat surprising to note that the governing ideas which survive are, after all, comparatively few. Of all the burning questions which aroused bitter controversy and rent the Church into sects and parties, only one or two are of first-rate importance and retain that subtle element of vitality which gives to human effort an enduring value. It is not of course maintained that these past discussions are wholly void of significance and have contributed

nothing to the advancement of thought. Their results, whether positive or negative, have been incorporated in the continuity of life. But they have lost their separate individuality and independence as shaping forces of the spiritual world.

Of the influences which have profoundly modified modern thought none has been more fruitful than what has been called the 'awakening of the historical sense,' which has begotten the method of conceiving life as a whole according to the principle of development. As a result of this new way of regarding things the static view of the universe has yielded to a dynamic conception of reality based upon historical evolution. It is difficult for us to-day, accustomed to this mode of contemplating the world of nature and life, to realise the immense transformation it has effected in its application to religious problems. It has revolutionized modern theology. It has been successfully applied to the study of Scripture, to the history of doctrine, and to Christianity as a whole. Revelation is no longer construed, as once and for all given, a finished product, but as an ever-growing and expanding manifestation of the divine mind. The old systems of dogmatics appear to us now remote and artificial in comparison with the works of modern times, which recognise the law of growth and see in the earlier phases of doctrine parts of a larger whole evolving through experience and giving justification and value to previous types of thought.

The centuries since the Reformation, as this work has sought to show, disclose a twofold movement in theological interpretation—a God-centred, and a man-centred movement. The second arose as a reaction to the first. But that again produced a counter-revolt and a return to the first position. And religion

has thus alternated between two types—an objective and a subjective. The one has laid the accent upon God's sovereignty and decrees ; the other, upon man, his interests, claims and experiences—as the dominant idea of theology. The antithesis has taken different forms and assumed different names. It has appeared sometimes as Intellectualism versus Emotionalism, sometimes as Transcendentalism in contrast to Immanence : sometimes as the religion of Divine Sovereignty, as against that of inward consciousness. But both attitudes to ultimate truth are one-sided and partial : and they prove effective only as they are united in a higher synthesis of thought—*viz.*, in a theology in which not God alone, nor man alone, is the governing and all-sufficient conception—but Christ, who unites in Himself the Divine and Human ; and represents on the one hand God's approach to the world, and on the other, the world's approach to God. In short, the theology of the future, if it is to do justice to the fullness of Christian truth—as at once God's disclosure of Himself to man, and man's discovery of, and surrender of himself to, God—must be neither abstractly theocentric, nor exclusively anthropocentric, to adopt recent German terminology, but *Christo-centric*.

> "Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning.
> Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ." [1]

Hence the forces emerging from the past, which are of vital interest for the present, concentrate upon *three* main realities—*God, Man and Christ.* In the light of the foregoing remarks these may be conceived as representing successive stages in the history of religious thought. First, the great dogmatic systems of the

[1] *Saint Paul*, by Fred. W. H. Myers.

Reformation were focused upon the Nature and attributes of an absolute Deity. But there arose a reaction, and theological enquiry centred upon the inner consciousness and freedom of man. Finally, the problem of to-day is Christological—the meaning and value for God and man of the Christ of history and faith.

IV

It will only be necessary to refer briefly to these three ideas which may be termed the final resultant of the forces of religious thought.

1. Theology is attaining to a more adequate conception of God. The old 'proofs' of the divine existence are now largely discredited, at least as formal proofs.[1] But a deeper realization of the presence of God in nature and life, as the ground and rationale of all being, dominates thought. It is true the old Judaic notion of the Deity is still maintained in some quarters. But in recent works an earnest attempt is made to expound the idea of Fatherhood, and sound the note of love as the clue to the meaning of the thoughts of providence and sacrifice which prevail in the Bible. Along with the conception of love, as the essence and highest category of God, the problem of personality has naturally received fresh emphasis. The Deistic ideal of a God who does not interfere, as well as the later intellectualistic conception of an Absolute, fail to satisfy the religious instinct of our time or to afford a convincing explanation of consciousness and purpose, without which, it is felt, God would be but an empty abstraction. In the recent Gifford

[1] See remarks by W. R. Thomson, *op. cit.*

Lectures of Mr. Balfour, Professors Pringle-Pattison and Sorley, it is worthy of note that the conscious personality of the Deity, in whose image man has been created and with whom he has affinity and relationship, has been unhesitatingly accentuated. Mr. Balfour especially pleads for a God " whom we can love, pray to . . . and who takes sides." This demand of the heart for a personal Deity with whom the individual can enter into personal relations is becoming strong even in those forms of literature which are not expressly philosophical. " To some," says a recent writer,[1] " this appears as a demand for ' a magnified non-natural man,' a God made by man after His own image." There is certainly a danger of debasing the idea of God by some of the excessively anthropomorphic presentations of the Deity which we meet with in popular religious books. But the criticism is unjust in regard to the utterances just mentioned. The higher theology conceives of God as somehow including man in Himself, (as dwelling in Him and drawing his life from Him,) as can be predicated of no human being.[2]

Every modern theology affirms some doctrine of divine Immanence. But at first sight the belief in an immanent God appears to be equivalent to a denial of personality. And no doubt, historically, those who have most strongly asserted the immanence of God have been those also most inclined to suppress the divine self-consciousness. Of this tendency, Spinoza is the most conspicuous example. But, on the other hand, if an exclusive insistence upon divine Immanence

[1] See an article in *Times* on the death of Haeckel. Nov. 1919.

[2] See the theology of Häring, who seeks to unite the Personality and Absoluteness of God, in working out the meaning of the category of love, *Christian Faith*, pp. 485-504.

has its pantheistic peril, the conception of an exclusively transcendent Deity involves difficulties not less acute. Mr. Clement Webb has pointed out that "the God of Aristotle, though purely transcendental, in no way satisfies the requirements of personal religion. . . . He utterly transcends and is beyond the reach of personal communion." [1] Much of the semi-scientific language of the day used about God is open to the same objection. Men have argued for a "great first cause," an "architect of the universe." But there is nothing in these titles to arouse or satisfy the religious emotion. The problem of theology to-day is to unite in some higher and all-embracing category the ideas of Immanence and Transcendence, to realise that God is in the world, pervading it, animating it, and yet also Sovereign over it, at once Personal, yet Absolute. The key to the problem is probably to be found in the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation. If theology would but set itself earnestly to the task of working out the implications of the supreme truth of Revelation, it would go far to realize what Paul meant when he spoke of a God who is over all yet as One, in Whom we live and move and have our being.

2. The second problem of theology relates to the nature of *Man,* "the value and destiny of the individual." And here the question of *sin* requires fresh investigation. The old idea of the 'Fall' and the original depravity of man have sunk into the background. Man cannot be treated simply as a link in a causal nexus. But it is not enough to predicate the freedom and self-determination of man. Man does stand in a peculiar relation to the past. He inherits something. He begins life handicapped. Mere self-determination is insufficient to overcome the obstacle

[1] Gifford Lectures, delivered in St. Andrews.

which sin puts in his way and to ensure his upward progress. Hence the notion of the soul's affinity with God has to be emphasized, and the capacity for the divine postulated. Whatever man's past history has been, nothing can alter the fact that he has been made in the divine image and bears the divine impress. His degradation cannot wholly obliterate his inherent nobility; and indeed, his very sense of shame and shortcoming witnesses to his possible holiness. The reality of a growing thing lies in its highest potency and promise. In the light of the last we interpret the first. All that is best and greatest in man, all that he is capable of becoming, exists potentially in him, just as the flower and leaf and fruit are hidden implicitly in the seedling. This, it has been argued, is really the Pauline view of human nature. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but now (even now) are we the Sons of God." Christ is the end and consummation of the whole creation. This is the meaning for us of Christ's manifestation of God and man, and the meaning of our own response to the divine Revelation. Everywhere, in all men, in virtue of our manhood, there is a capacity for Christ, a power of response to the divine appeal. In Browning's phrase, "a tendency to God."

3. The third feature of present-day theology is the new accent laid on *Christ*. Around the Person of the Christ the battle of religion is likely to be waged. The quest of the living Jesus, the meaning and value of the historical Christ for God and the world is the most notable characteristic of present thought. The Christian faith stands or falls by the ultimate values we attach to Christ. That was seen as early as Schleiermacher. Ritschl pressed the problem home, and it has been growing in importance till our day. Hardly

anything else in theology matters so long as this remains undecided. Men are coming to see that they must read this Man in the light of absolute virtue. How does He stand to man? How does He stand to God? As is the one answer, so the other will be: "There is only one fatal heresy about Christ," says a suggestive writer; "It is the heresy called 'docetism,' which robs Christ of all reality. Any taint of this heresy, which robs Christianity of all its power, a power which lies not in its sublimity or consistency, but in the reality of the Christ that all Christians would like to be: in whom they see themselves as they would be, and not some foreign or unreal perfection, whether of God or man."[1] While that is true on the human side, it is not the heresy to which the present day is prone. What we are apt to disparage at the present is the divine implication of Christ's person. And it is upon the divineness or uniqueness of the historical Christ that our thought must be focused. While many have surrendered the miraculous accompaniments of the Incarnation—The 'Virgin Birth' and the Physical Resurrection—they retain the essence of orthodox belief by dwelling upon the supernatural character of the Incarnate Word. Some, again, who reject the supernaturalism of the Gospel records, hold that the Personality of Jesus is a unique phenomenon in history, and they still cling to a belief in his sinlessness and absolute goodness, without carefully examining the implicates of that confession. It hardly seems possible to arrest thought in any half-way house. It seems rather that we must return to the old unitarian or theistic view, or press boldly forward in the line of the claims of the Johannine Gospel.

[1] See a suggestive book, *Studies in Christianity*, by A. Clutton Brock.

The divine dynamic of Christianity as a redemptive power, centring in Christ, is inseparably linked up with our conception of Christ, and the whole meaning of Christianity as a religion of redemption comes into the field. We must resolutely face anew and work out afresh the relation to God and man of the historical Christ. For it comes to this, that a Christ who does not, and cannot redeem is no Christ. And a Redeemer who does not vindicate His unique power and authority, as separate from and higher than all the energies of nature, cannot hold man's confidence. Modern Christology gathers up into itself all other problems of faith. The Incarnation and life of Christ, the significance of His death and sacrifice, the Resurrection, and Indwelling Presence—are not isolated questions; they are all of a piece, intimately related to one another, and indeed to all ultimate problems of reality, as parts of one whole. Christ constitutes the problem of Christianity, the problem of God and man as well.

As a consequence of the central position of Christ in religious thought, Christian ethics is acquiring a new importance in relation to national and international questions, and a new emphasis is being placed upon Christ's teaching of the Kingdom of God. There have been different interpretations given of the eschatological doctrine of Jesus.[1] But whatever we may say of the apocalyptic utterances of Jesus as a whole in their bearing upon the doctrine of 'the last things,' there seems to the present writer no ground for assuming that Christ taught an "Interims-Ethik" applicable only to His own day and circumstances. To base His moral maxims on a view of life adapted to a transitory world, is to distort the perspective of His teaching

[1] See E. Scott's *The Kingdom of God*, for one of the best treatments of the whole subject.

and to rob it of its unity and insight.[1] The ethics of Jesus are everywhere characterized by inwardness, universality and permanence; and in His attitude to the problems of practical life, there is a serenity and sympathy of spirit which has nothing in common with the nervous and excited forecast of sudden catastrophe. The Kingdom of God as outlined by Christ appeals to us, as at once a gift immediately bestowed, and a task to be worked out by man in the history of the world. It is surely no illegitimate application of the mind of Jesus to see in His teaching of the Kingdom a great social ideal to be realized by the personal activities and mutual services of its citizens. It finds its field and opportunity in the realm of human society, and is a 'good' to be secured in the larger life of humanity. This ideal, though dimly perceived by the early Church, has become gradually operative in the great liberating movements of modern times. It has been the Soul of all mighty reformations and is the source and inspiration of the new social and international order which has begun to mean so much for our generation.

Thus do we see that while a more rational interpretation of Christ's Person and teaching is being attempted by modern theology, a genuine effort is also being made to bring the Christianity of the Son of Man to bear upon all practical questions of life and conduct, and to set forth the fulfilment of the 'Kingdom' as the ideal and hope of the whole world.

V

In his recent *Recollections*, Lord Morley tells us that the year 1877 was the high-water mark of anti-

[1] See the present writer's *Christianity and Ethics*, pp. 134 ff. and 246.

christian criticism. In that year he was the editor of the *Fortnightly Review*, and he was being deluged by articles inspired by the new scientific theory of evolution, either attacking orthodox theology as a whole or criticising adversely some particular belief. But it is interesting to note that just in that very year T. H. Green was preaching in Oxford to a group of thoughtful students, his famous sermon, afterwards published under the title, *Faith*, which contains the essence of his religious teaching and enunciates the lines of reconciliation which he believed to be possible between the old faith and the new knowledge. "The air is full of the conflict between science and religion," he tells his undergraduate hearers. "Both sides are but exhibiting different aspects of the same human spirit. The scientific impulse on the one side, and the 'faith that worketh by love' on the other, exhibit the same spirit in different relations." . . . The very existence of science is a witness to the reality of the spiritual—as it implies a rational self-consciousness always stretching out to learn more and to attain to a higher degree of spiritual being. God is not to be sought in nature, nor in any beginning or end of nature, but in man himself. Reason is self-consciousness. "This rational self-consciousness is the element of identity between us and a perfect Being, who is, in full realization, what we are only in principle and possibility. . . . . This is the principle in man by virtue of which he projects himself into the future—into some other world, as a more perfect being than he actually is. This best is his God."

This was Green's argument in brief. Thus does he epitomise his philosophy of religion. The significance of the passage, which might be taken as the manifesto of the higher idealism of the age and the trend of

future thought, suggests parallel lines on which a new religious construction might be made. The scientist takes one line, the Christian another. But both admit of reconciliation. In both are aspects of the same divine truth and the same human quest.

Lord Morley, says a recent writer in the *Hibbert Journal*, followed neither the Christian nor the scientific line—but he was more in sympathy with the second than the first, and he remained an agnostic. Readers of his *Recollections* cannot but feel that " a cloud of sadness deepening into gloom towards its close hangs over his life record." The war was a set-back of all his traditions. There is no hint or hope in all these pages that even the unthinkable horrors of the moment might be the birth-pangs of a better order. The world for him goes out in chaos and despair.

Another great Victorian, a contemporary of John Morley who, with a poet's vision foresaw the Armageddon, had a robuster faith. In the well-known lines of *Locksley Hall*, which the war has revived, Tennyson pictured the world plunging through the thunder-storm. But beyond he saw the " Federation of Mankind," and heard the ringing watchword, " Forward ! "

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INDEX

A

Absolute, 35, 61, 65, 165, 168 f., 306, 307, 316.
Acton, Lord, 49.
Agnosticism, 161 f., 270, 370, 335, 337, 339, 353, 424.
Alcock, 215.
Amiel, 241, 357.
Andrewes, Bishop, 89, 90.
Anglican, Anglo-Catholic, 86 f., 332. See Tractarianism.
Anthropocentric, 32, 53, 153. See Theocentric.
Aquinas, Mysticism of, 9.
Arminianism, 56 ff., Remonstrants, 57; "Conditional Election," 57; Significance of, 64.
Arndt, 129.
Arnold, of Rugby, 197, 348 f.
Arnold, Matthew, on Criticism, 230; on Culture, 248; on Wordsworth, 260; Poet of Doubt, 267, 268; Prose Writings, 392 f.
Asquith, on Victorian Era, 406.
Astruc, 181.
Atonement, Luther on, 201; Calvin, 37; Socinian View, 55; Remonstrants', 57; Grotius, "Satisfaction of Christ," 58; Anselm's "Commercial Theory," 59; Hegel, 172; Schleiermacher, 290; Ritschl, 302; Maurice, 351; F. W. Robertson, 359; M'Leod Campbell, 360-362.
Authority, Protestant Idea of, 6; Calvin, 35 f.; Newman, 329; See Bible and Church.

B

Bacon, Francis, 97, 102, 210.
Bacon, Roger, 103.
Balfour, A. J., 227, 316, 394, 409, 417.
Ballarmin, 11.
Balzac, 259.
Baur, 5, 189 f.
Baxter, 80, 81 f., 91.
Bayle, 102.
Bell, "Comet," 214.
Bengel, 134.
Bentley, 113, 118.
Bergson, 64, 142, 143, 391, 397, 410.
Berkeley, 119, 137.
Bernard of Clairvaux, 8.
Beza, 70.
Bible, 8, 10; Luther on, 25, 29; Calvin on, 39; Puritan, 73; Cromwell, 79; Chillingworth, 93; Wesley, 143, 310.
Biblical Criticism, 180; Old Testament, 181 f.; New Testament, 187 f.; Tübingen School, 189; Johannine Problem, 194; in Britain, 195; Scottish School, 198; Cause of Unrest, 375.
"Biblicists," Cremer and Kaehler, 309.
Biedermann, his Conception of Christianity, 175.

Boehme, 128-9, 138, 250.
Boileau, 234.
Bolingbroke, 117.
Bonaventura, 8.
Börne, 250.
Bosanquet, 394, 315.
Bossuet, 135, 234.
Bourdaloue, 234.
Boutroux, on Boehme, 129.
Bradley, 394.
Brandes, Geo., on "Young Germany," 250.
Brock, A. Clutton, 420.
Brown, Adam, 176, 292.
Browning, Robert, 67, 252, 271 f.; Optimism, 272; on Christ, 273.
Bruce, A. B., 366.
Bruno, 209.
Buckle, 77, 138, 327.
Bullinger, 70.
Burns, Robert, Poetry of 253; Theology of, 254.

C

Caird, Edward, 176; on Comte, 161; Evolution, 221; Relation of Poetry and Philosophy, 230; on Dante, 282; Rousseau, 239; on Carlyle, 384.
Caird, John, 176, 366.
Calderon, 234.
Calvin, Calvinism, 33; *Institutes* of, 34; Polity, 34-5; Theology, 35; Doctrine of Election, 36; Christ's Sacrifice, 37; View of Bible, 39; Ethics, 43; Influence of, 44 f.; 61, 70, 98, 316.
Campbell, M'Leod, 360 ff.; on Atonement, 362; Influence on Theology, 366.
Carlyle, 21, 386, 213; Culture, 248; his Philosophy, 379 ff.; Radicalism, 382; Doctrine of Symbols, 383 f.; on Christ, 385; Idealism, 387.
Cartwright, 75.
Catholic, Catholicism, 6; Corruptions, 11; Counter-Reformation, 49; Jesuitism, 51; Tractarian view, 331, 335.
Chandler, Edward, Defence of Christianity, 114.
Chateaubriand, 330.
Cheyne, on Founders of Old Testament Criticism, 182.
Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, 93 f.; Locke on, 94-98.
Christ, 26, 62, 88, 125; Wesley's "Back to Christ," 141, 148; Kant's view of, 159; Fichte's, 165; Schelling's, 166; Hegel's, 172; Schleiermacher's, 289, 294; Campbell, 364; Ritschl, 302; Tractarian, 340; Lives, by Strauss, 187; Farrar and Geikie, 373; Significance of, 410, 419.
Chubb, 111.
Church, 5, 8, 11, 17, 25; Calvin's Doctrine of, 34 f.; Catholic, 49; Puritan and Anglican view of, 71 f.; Hooker's Polity, 87 f.; Laud, 89; of Pietism, 128; of Methodism, 138 f., 147; in relation to Science, 204; Newman's view, 330 f., 337; Coleridge on, 346; Arnold, 349.
"Clapham Sect," 144.
Clarke, 112, 118.
Clough, Poet of Doubt, 266, 267.
Cocceius, 63, 127.
Colenso, 197.
Coleridge, Hartley, quoted, 398.
Coleridge, T. S., 252; *Ancient Mariner*, 256; Theology of, 345 f.; Influence on Liberal Thought, 346.
Colet, 70.
Collins, 113; on Prophecy, 113.
Comte, 161; Agnosticism of, 162.
"Conservation of Energy," 216.
Conybeare, Reply to Tindal, 110, 118.

Copernicus, 208; Influence on Religion, 209.
Corneille, 234, 235.
Cowper, W., 145, 253.
"Covenant Theology," 62; Cocceius, 62.
Cremer, 304, 309.
Croce, Benedetto, 409 f.
Cromwell, 79, 83.
Cumberland, Richard, on Probability, 122.

D

Dante, 231 f.
Darwinism, 195, 219; Relation to Theology, 221; Descent of Man, 222; Origin of Species, 403.
Davidson, A. B., 198.
Davidson, Samuel, 198.
D'Holbach, 124.
Deism, 106 f.; Definition of, 107; Anti-deists, 117 f., 319.
Denney, James, on M'Leod Campbell, 365.
Descartes, 102; Method, 102; Doubt, 102, 128, 234.
Development, 176; History of, 177, 220, 221. See Darwin and Evolution.
Diderot, 124.
Docetism, 420.
Dorner, J. A., on Pietism, 146, 175.
Dostoievsky, 410.
Driesch, 224.
Driver, 200.
Drummond, Prof., *Ascent of Man*, 226.
Dryden, 253.
Dualism, Divine Power and Human Will, 64, 66; of Arminianism, 67; Browning's Clay and Potter's Wheel, 67; of Kant, 160; Science and Religion, 227; in Conception of God, 417; Immanence and Transcendence, 418.

E

Ecce Homo, Seeley's, 373.
Eckhart, on Mysticism, 9.
Eichhorn, 181.
"Eighteenth Century," its Character, 100, 212, 279.
Electricity, Science of, 217.
Eliot, Geo., 377 f.
Elizabeth, Queen, 70 f., 97.
Emerson, 383, 400.
"Erlangen School," 308.
Erskine of Linlathen, 359; his Theology, 360.
Essays and Reviews, 367; Writers of, 367 f.
Ethics, of Calvin, 43; School of Shaftesbury, 112; of Consequences, 118; "Interims-Ethik," 421; Schäder, 314; Ritschl, 300.
Eucken, 396, 408, 412.
Evolution, Theory of, 219 ff. See Darwin, Hegel, and History.
Ewald, 184 f.

F

Fairbairn, A. M., 341, 342.
Faith, Luther on Justification by, 26; Calvin, 41; Cromwell's, 71; Jeremy Taylor on, 96; Wesley's view of, 143; Faith and Science, 203 f.; Schleiermacher's, 289, 291; Rule of, 298.
Falkland, Lord, 92.
Federal Theology, 62; Note of Scottish Church, 62. See "Covenants."
Fénelon, 136.
Feuerbach, 175, 251.
Fichte, Philosophy of, 164; View of Christianity, 165; Logos, 165.
"Fourth Gospel," 193.
Frank of Erlangen School, 309.
Franke, Leader of Pietism, 131.

Frederick the Great, 133.
Froude, J. A., on Tractarianism, 320; on Romanism, 327; Early Writings, 378; Life of Carlyle, 379.
Froude, R. Hurrell, 320-323.

G

Galileo, 201, 209.
Gardiner, S. R., on Puritanism, 76.
Germany, its Literature, 242; Romanticism, 249; "Sturm und Drang" Period, 243; "Young Germany," 250; "Kultur," 251; Rise of Critical Philosophy, 154; its Theology, Schleiermacher, etc., 278; more Positive Attitude to Religion, 408.
Gibbon, 116, 137.
Gladstone, 350; on Butler, 120.
Glaubenslehre, Schleiermacher's, 278, 280, 282 f., 301.
God, Sovereignty, 35; Conception of, 177, 416; Socinian Doctrine, 55; Proofs, for Existence, 178, 195, 228; Schleiermacher's view of, 285; Ritschl, 300; in Modern Thought, 307; Schaeder's Theocentric Theology, 308 f.; Häring, 313; Trinity, 171, 315; Carlyle on, 383; Central Theme of Theology, 416; Fatherhood and Personality, 416; Immanence, 417.
Goethe, 177, 231; Personality of, 244; *Faust*, 245 f., 250, 258.
Goldsmith, 253.
Gore, *Lux Mundi*, *Incarnation*, 373.
Graf, 185.
Green, T. H., 394, 423.
Griesbach, on Synoptics, 193.
Grotius, 58, 59, 89.
Grutzmacher, 304.

H

Haeckel, 224, 404, 417.
Hales, John, 92.
"Halle School" of Pietism, 131.
Hamilton, Sir Wm., Agnosticism, 163.
Hampden's Bampton Lectures, 349.
Hare, 347.
Häring, 304; his Theology, 313 f., 308, 417.
Harnack, 193, 304, 408.
Hegel, 63; on Boehme, 129; Absolute Idealism, 167 f.; *Religionsphilosophie*, 169 f.; View of Christianity, 171 f.; the Historical Christ, 172; Disciples of, 174, 176, 178-9, 316, 409.
Heine, 250.
Henson, 78, 81.
Herbert, Lord, of Cherbury, 103; his "Notitiae," 103.
Herder, 182, 243.
Herrmann, 274, 304.
History, Continuity of, 3, 100; Historical Sense, 101; Hegelian Idea of Evolution of, 176; Baur's, 190, 221, 414.
Hobbes, Thos., 104; his *Leviathan*, 104, 112.
Hofmann, 309.
Hooker, Bishop, 75; *Eccles. Polity*, 87; View of Church, 88.
Howe, 80.
Hügel, von, 129.
Hugo, Victor, 240 f.
Humanism, 16, 18; Pater on, 19.
Hume, David, 103, 112; Miracles, 116, 119.
Hunt, 339.
Hutton, R. H., 339, 377, 380.
Huxley, 163.

I

Idealism, Idealistic Philosophy, Influence of, 153 f., 176 f.
Imitatio Christi, 10.

Immanence of God, 108, 125, 417.
Infinite. See Absolute.
Inge, 397.
Inspiration, Influence of Biblical Criticism on, 181, 201, 371.

J

James, William, 143, 314, 395.
Jansenism, 134-5.
Jesuitism, 50 f.
Jesus. See Christ.
Joachim of Flora, his *Eternal Gospel*, 7.
Johnson, Dr., 118.
Jones, Sir H., 3.
Jowett, B., 368 f.; Character and Writings, 370-1, 394.

K

Kaehler, 309-11.
Kaftan, Jul., 304; Kingdom of God, 305; *Seinurtheile*, 306; View of Absolute, 306.
Kahnis, on Puritanism, 146.
Kant, Philosophy of, 154; Theory of Knowledge, 155; of God, 157; Meaning of Religion, 158; Dualism of, 160.
Keats, 252.
Keble, 320; *The Christian Year*, 322.
Kempis, Thomas à, 10.
Kepler, 102, 209, 229.
Kidd, Benjamin, *Science of Power*, 402 f.
Kingdom of God, Schleiermacher's View, 293; Ritschl on, 301, 421.
Kingsley, 354 f.

L

La Mettrie, 212.
Lardner, 118.
Latitudinarians of Seventeenth Century, 90, 97.
Laud, 76; Estimate of, 89.
Law, Wm., 118, 137.
Lecky, on Rousseau, 237, 206.
Leibnitz, 133, 208.
Leland, 118.
Leonardo da Vinci, 232.
Lessing, 176, 187; Literary Works, 243.
Lewes, Geo., 378.
Literature, Relation to Religion, 230 f.; of Italy and Spain, 282, 237; of France, 231; of Germany, 242 f.; of Britain, 252 f.
Lindsay, Principal, History of Reformation, on Personal Element, 6.
Locke, 94, 103; *Essay on Human Understanding*, 106; *Reasonableness of Christianity*, 107; Connection with Deism, 107.
Logos, 193 f.; Fichte on, 165.
Loisy, 409.
Lollards, 7. See Wyklif.
Loyola, Ignatius, 50 f.
Luke, Author of Gospel and Acts, Harnack on, 193.
Lütgert, *Natur und Geist Gottes*, 311.
Luther, 6, 11; Personality, 23; Rediscovery of God, 26; "Justification by Faith," 26; "Freedom of Christian Man," 27; Writings, 29; Character, 30 f.; Subjectivity and Individualism, 32.
Lux Mundi, Essays on, 373.
Lyell, Influence of Geology on Biblical Criticism, 195.

M

Macaulay, 51; on Puritans, 75, 77.
Mackintosh, H. R., on Person of Christ, 179, 280.
Malebranche, 234.
Man, Problem of, 418; Self-Consciousness, 14, 206, 213.
Mansel, Dean, 163, 337, 353.
Marvin, T. S., *Century of Hope*, 217, 406.

Maurice, F. D., 351 f., 403.
Melanchthon, 16.
Mercier, Cardinal, 409.
Methodism, 136 f.; its Creed, 141. See Wesley.
Michael Angelo, 16, 234.
Micklem, Nath., *The Open Light*, 407.
Middleton, Conyers, 115; *Free Inquiry*, 116.
Milman, *History of Jews*, Influence on Biblical Criticism, 196.
Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 83 f.; Masson on, 84; *Areopagitica*, 84, 97, 321.
Miracles, Objection to, by Deists, 113, 115; Hume's *Essay*, 116, 120; Wendland's *Miracles and Christianity*, 202, 212, 115; Influence of Evolution on, 219, 224; "Miracle of Will," 228; Schleiermacher on, 285, 291.
Modernism, 408.
Molière, 234, 235.
Monism, 65. See Dualism.
Montesquieu, *Spirit of Laws* on Historical Development, 177.
Montaigne, 234.
Morgan, 111.
Morley, Lord, 422, 424.
Müller, Julius, 296.
Musset, Alfred de, 259.
Mystics, Mysticism, German, of Fourteenth Century, 9; Doctrine of "Inner Light," 10, 128; Underhill on, 396.

N

Natural Selection, 224. See Darwin.
Nature, Natural Law, 102; Deistic view, 107 f.; View of Butler, 120, 124; View of Kant, 160; Newtonian Law transforms Conception of, 211; Progress of Natural Science, 204 f.; Interpretation of, 228.
Neo-Hegelianism, 176, 394.
Newton, Isaac, 211.
Newton, John, 145.
Newman, Cardinal, 319; European Tour, 324; "Lead, Kindly Light," 325; *Apologia*, 328; Character, 329; Methods, 320; *Tracts for the Times*, 332; *Via Media*, 333; *Tract 90*, 333. Writings, 335; Influence, 336; Agnosticism of, 337.
Newman, Francis, Negative tendency of, and Works of, 377.
Niebuhr, 196.
Nietzsche, 251, 404.
Nitzsch, 296
Noetic School, 324, 347.
Novalis, 249, 250.

O

Objectivism, 153. See Subjectivism.
Old Testament Criticism, 181 f., 197; Scottish School, 198-9.
Oman, J., 281.
Orr, James, 298, 366.
Otto, Naturalism and Religion, 224, 408.
Owen, 80, 91.
Oxford Movement. See Newman.

P

Paley, 112; Definition of Virtue, 112; on Design, 124, 196.
Pantheism, 9; Goethe, 245; Wordsworth, 262; Tennyson, 270, 345, 418.
Pascal, 122, 135, 234.
Paterson, W. P., 383, 298, 303.
Pattison, Mark, 110, 369.
Paul, 221.
"Peasants' War," 47.
Pfleiderer, 175, 183.
Philosophy, Locke, 101; Kant's Critical, 154 f.; Idealism, 153 f.; Scottish School, 375; Common Sense, 375; Descartes, 102; Bacon, 97, 102; Positivism, 161; Agnosticism,

162; Rationalism, 101 f.; Pragmatism, 395.
Pietism, Phases of, 126 f.; English, 136; its Individualism, 147.
Plato, 231.
Pragmatism, 395.
Probability, Butler on, 121; Cumberland, 122; Pascal, 122; Gladstone, 122; Leslie Stephen, 122.
Prophecy, Deistic view, 113; Old Testament Criticism, 181f.
Protestantism, Origin of, 4; its Positiveness, 4; Moral Forces, 5; in England, 69 f.
Pringle-Pattison, 66; on Kant, 159; "Gifford Lectures," 417.
Psychology, 396.
Punishment, Eternal, Farrar on, 371; Cox and Balwin Brown, 371; Garvie, 371; Maurice's *Essays*, 352.
Pünjer, Definition of Deism, 108.
Puritanism, 69 f.; Origin of Name, 72; Wyklif, 73; Reverence for Bible, 73; Green on, 74; Cromwell, 79; Significance of, 99.
Pusey, 130, 198, 322, 326, 342, 343.

Q

Quietism, 136.

R

Racine, 234.
Ranke, 49.
Rationalism, 101 f.
"Reform Bill," 320.
Reformation, 3 f.; Causes of, 7; in Relation to Science, 207 f.
Reimarus, 187.
"Remonstrants," 57, 128.
Renaissance, 12 f.; Character of, 13; Note of Personality, 14; Relation to higher Ideals, 15; Religious Aspect of, 16; Influence on Science, 206.
Reuchlin, 16.
Revelation, 124.
Revolution, French, Influence of, 255, 258.
Richter, Jean Paul, 250.
Ritschl, on Pietism, 130, 146, 297 f.; *Werturtheile*, 300; Kingdom of God, 301; Centrality of Christ, 302; Influence on Thought, 304, 419.
Robertson, F. W., 356 f.; Principles, 358; Personality of Christ, 359; Vicarious Sacrifice, 359.
Romanism, 70, 327, 336.
Romanticism, 234; in Germany, 249; in England, 252, 318.
Ruskin, 388 f.; Works and Message, 389; Law of Perfection, 390; Political Economy, 392.

S

Sacramentarianism, 341.
Sanderson, 90.
"Saumur School," 59, 60.
Schaeder, 308 f., 314.
Schelling, 165; Incarnation, 166; Influence of, 117, 249.
Schleiermacher, 153; Romanticism, 249, 277 ff.; *Discourses*, 280; *Christliche Glaube*, 282; Being of God, 285; Sin, 286; Election, 287; Person and Work of Christ, 288; Subjectivity of, 291; Influence on Theology, 292; Disciples, 296.
Schiller, 248, 249.
Schlegel, 249.
Science, Influence of, 203 f.; Relation to Religion, 227; Cause of Unrest, 376.
Scott, Walter, 241, 252.
Scott, Ernest, Kingdom of God, 421.
Seely, 248.
Shelley, 252; Poetry of Despair and Hope, 263 f.; Religion of, 264.

Seeberg, 305, 309, 406.
" Society of Jesus," 50, 51.
Socinianism, 55 f.; Doctrine of God, 55; Atonement, 55.
Shaftesbury, Lord, 105, 111.
Shakespeare, 77, 97, 231, 236.
Sherlock, on Prophecy, 114.
Smith, Geo. Adam, 200.
Smith, Robertson, 199.
Solovyof, Vladimir, 410 f.; his Philosophy, 410; Theology and Ethics, 411; Kingdom of God, 410.
Sorley, 65, 417.
Southey, 255; Life of Wesley, 126.
Spencer, Herbert, Agnosticism of, 163, 337, 394.
Spener, 130 f.
Spenser, Edmund, 97, 252.
Spinoza, 102, 128, 280; Influence on Goethe, 245; on Schleiermacher, 280; Pantheism of, 417.
Stanley, Dean, 198; *Life of Arnold*, 350, 368.
Steam Engine, 214.
Stephen, Sir Leslie, 91, 137.
Stephen, Sir James, 83, 145.
Stillingfleet, his *Irenicum*, 90.
Strauss, 115, 179, 183; *Leben Jesu*, 187, 376.
Storr, V. F., Development of English Theology, 148.
Stubbs, on Causes of Reformation, 6.
Subjectivism, Luther's 32; Calvin's Objectivity, 44, 54; Problem of Absolutism and Subjectivism, 64; Individualism of Puritans, 98; of Pietism, 147; Principle of Subjectivity in Theology, 153; Subjectivity of Schleiermacher, 291; Tendency to, in followers of Ritschl, 308; Schäder's Theocentric Theology, 308; Examples of Subjective tendency, 309 f.; Häring on, 313; Danger of over-emphasis of Objectivism, 315; Religious Pragmatism, 316; Reference to Contrasted Types, 414 f.; Synthesis, in Christocentric Theology, 125, 179, 229, 413, 415.
Symonds, J. A., on Jesuitism, 51.

T

Taine, on Puritans, 77.
Tallantyre, S. S. G., Letters of Voltaire, 236.
Tasso, 234.
Tauler, Doctrine of Divine Immanence, 10.
Taylor, Jeremy, 108; *Liberty of Prophesying*, 95; Hallam on, 96.
Tennyson, 252, 268 f.; " The Larger Hope," 269; *In Memoriam*, 269; Agnosticism of, 270; Pantheism, 271, 424.
Theocentric Theology, 53, 64, 153, 308; View of Schäder, 308 f., 414.
Thomson, James, *Seasons*, 253.
Thomson, W. R., 178, 307, 308, 416.
Tillotson, 118.
Tindal, 109; *Christianity as old as Creation*, 110.
Toland, 108; *Christianity not Mysterious*, 109.
Torshell, Samuel, on Puritan Hypocrisy, 78.
Tractarianism, 318 f. See Newman.
Transcendentalism, 163 f.
Troeltsch, Individualism of Reformation, 6, 207, 304, 305, 306, 408.
Tübingen School, 189. See Baur.
Tulloch, John, 323, 333, 346, 348.
Tyrrell, " Modernism," 409.
Twesten, 296.

U

Ullmann, 296.
Underhill, on Mysticism, 129, 396.
Unity of Universe, 218.
Ussher, 90.

V

Vatke, 183, 187.
Victorian Era, 401 f.; Asquith on, 406
Voet, 127.
Voltaire, 124, 212, 235; Letters, 236; Appreciation of Shakespeare, 236.

W

Wallace, William, 394.
Walpole, 259.
War, "Thirty Years'," 48, 251, 309, 406, 424.
Ward, W. G., *Ideal of the Christian Church* censured, 334.
Ward, Mrs. Humphry, 342, 394.
Waterland, 100.
Watson, John, on Newman, 337.
Watt, James, 214.
Webb, Clement, 418.
Weiss, Joh., 304.
Wellhausen, 186 f.
Wendland, Miraculous and Christianity, 202.
Werturtheile, Ritschl's Doctrine of, 300, 302; Kaftan's Doctrine of, 305.
Wesley, Charles, 139.
Wesley, John, 137; Conversion, 138; Organization, 139; Theology, 141 f.
Westphalia, Peace of, 48.
Wette, de, 182.
Whately, 347, 348.
Whitefield, 75.
Wilberforce, Wm., 145.
Wolff, Philosophy of, 132 f., 155.
Woolston, on Miracles, 115; Strauss's debt to, 115.
Wordsworth, 230, 252, 258; Influence, 259 f.
Wyclif, 8, 73, 139.

Z

Zinzendorf, 134.
Zurich Letters, 70.
Zwingli, 23.

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